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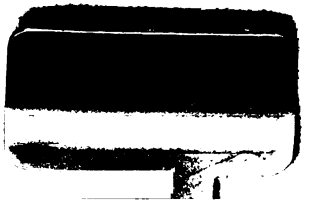

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NARRATIVE

OF THE

DEMOLITION

OF THE MONASTERY OF

PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS,

INCLUDING

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS

OF ITS

Latter Inhabitants,

By MARY ANNE SCHIMMELPENNINCK,

AUTHOR OF THEORY ON THE CLASSIFICATION OF BEAUTY AND DEFORMITY; DOM LANCELOT'S TOUR TO ALET, &c.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

London:

PRINTED FOR J. AND A. ARCH, CORNHILL.

1816.

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Black Horse Court, Fleet Street, London.

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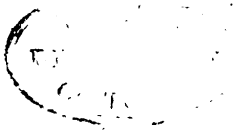
PREFACE.

THE Narrative of the DEMOLITION OF PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS was originally written by way of sequel to The TOUR to ALET.

It is only published as a distinct work, instead of a concluding volume to the new edition, in order to render it accessible to those who have already purchased the first edition, and who might not therefore wish to incumber themselves with the second.

We have chosen to begin abruptly as a fragment, rather than weary the Reader by a detail of all the litigations, chicanery, vexations, and oppressive decrees by which the Monastery of Port



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Royal des Champs was harassed for above fifty years; and by which were successively wrested from its possession, the House of Port Royal de Paris, and the principal part of its own revenues.

The three last articles of the Tour to Alêt will form a very sufficient introduction to this volume, the Narrative of which will afterwards sufficiently explain itself.

Many of the readers of this little work, will, probably, like the Author, be far removed from the distinctive peculiarities of opinions and practices characterizing Catholicism or Jansenism. Nevertheless she trusts, that, with her, they will be ready to hail the genuine spirit of Christianity, amongst whatever denominations the individuals possessing it, may be found.

The History of Port Royal affords many bright examples of the paramount

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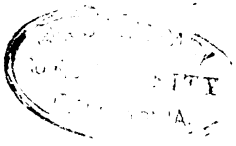
power of divine grace; it also exhibits a striking illustration of the inestimable value and importance of both religious and civil liberty, and of toleration; and it inculcates no less decided a lesson, on the duty of universally diffusing them, and of maintaining them sacred and inviolate.

MARY ANNE SCHIMMELPENNINCK.

Bristol,
December 3, 1815.



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NARRATIVE

OF THE

DEMOLITION OF THE MONASTERY

OF

PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS.

" Adoranda est veritas, etiam cruci affixa."

THE Cardinal de Noailles had long been harassed by the court party on the one side, and the Jesuits on the other, to issue a decree for the immediate suppression and extinction of the Abbey of Port Royal des Champs. He was a man of a timid and feeble mind, susceptible both of pious and of humane feeling, but incapable of acting with firmness and decision.

He most painfull felt the part which he

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was called upon, and even persecuted, to perform in this business. Good, but wavering, abhorring the persecution of others, but unable to withstand when it was directed against himself; too humane willingly to oppress, but too feeble to succour the innocent of his flock, by the firm defence which he as their pastor owed them; M. de Noailles became an awful exemplification of the common observation; that the weak are often made to perform as tools, acts of injustice, which the wicked who direct them, would never dare to perpetrate as principals.

Who would have thought, that whilst the abandoned Harlay, and the ambitious Perefixe, embittered as they were against Port Royal, and earnestly as they wished its destruction, never dared to lift a finger against it; that it should have been reserved to the succeeding archiepiscopacy of the good and mild Noailles, to level its venerable towers with the ground; to tear up and scatter the remains of its hallowed dead, and to leave scarcely one stone upon another?

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One anecdote* respecting the part he took in this affair, will clearly shew his character. It is related by M. Thomassin, the Cardinal's promoter.† About the time the question of the intended destruction of Port Royal was agitated, but before it was decreed in council, the Cardinal one day sent for M. Thomassin, and at his arrival at the Archbishopric, thus addressed him, "Sir, the destruction of Port Royal being decided upon, you must draw up and present me a petition to that effect." M. Thomassin waited till the conclusion of the Cardinal's speech, and then respectfully but firmly represented to him, that he was deceived, and that in fact, Port Royal was wholly different from the account which he had received; which was in truth only the representations of one particular party, who had long been its avowed enemies; and who

* Poulain, tom. i. p. 300.

† "*Promoteur,*" an ecclesiastic attached to the superior clergy, who have a wide jurisdiction. It is his office to transact the ecclesiastical law business of the diocese.

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were indeed inimical, not only to Port Royal, but to every thing good; and he concluded by saying, he was surprised his Eminence did not see how he endangered his own salvation, by lending the sanction of his name, to a deed which could only dishonor him.*

"Yes, my Lord," continued he, "it is only persons jealous of your very high reputation, who would seek to engage your Lordship in such an undertaking. They see plainly that the world highly reverences your virtues, and admires your character; they cannot attack the orthodoxy of your doctrine, and they wish to tarnish the lustre of so many excellences, and to serve their own malice, by endeavoring to draw you in, and to make you their agent, in an odious and detestable enterprize, which they are by far too prudent to venture upon in their own persons; and of which they will afterwards exculpate themselves, by throwing all the odium upon your Eminence."†

The Cardinal appeared struck with these

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* Poulain, tom. i. pp. 300, 301, 302. † Ibid.

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observations, and after a moment's pause, replied, "Sir, make me a memorial of all you have just now advanced; and of all the reasons which ought to induce a suspension of the destruction of Port Royal; but let it be drawn up immediately, I cannot wait, for I am pressed on all hands. They absolutely give me no peace."*

At the end of two or three days, accordingly, M. Thomassin presented the memorial ready drawn up to the Cardinal, who perused it to the end; after which he thanked him, for opening his eyes to the snare which was laid for him.†

The enemies of Port Royal, who were very impatient for its demolition, did not fail to visit the Cardinal in a few days, to discover how the affair went on. They were beyond measure surprized and chagrined, to see the total change in his disposition; especially as M. de Noailles told them the reasons on which it was founded.‡

They then saw that the only way of tri-

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* See note, page 4. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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umphing over his opposition, would be by intimidating him; they accordingly told him, that the King was much bent upon it, and that he would be much displeased at seeing it objected to by the Archbishop of Paris alone; and that when he should be called upon for a justification of his refusal, it would be too ridiculous to see his Eminence, Archbishop of the first province of the kingdom, and a Cardinal of the holy college, exculpating himself by pleading submission to the fancies of his secretary.*

The Archbishop, piqued by the sarcasm which accompanied this observation, habitually timorous, fearful also of the double humiliation of ridicule, compleatly wearied by his enemies, and in compleat doubt which side was true, finally agreed to comply with all they required.†

He then sent for Thomassin, and in a tone evidently chagrined and constrained, but yet decided, and as if to get rid of the business at once, said that the affair was finally

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* Poulain, tom. i. pp. 302, 303, 304. † Ibid.

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decided upon, and therefore the petition must be drawn up without further delay.*

M. Thomassin respectfully testified his astonishment at so unexpected and decided a resolution; and asked his Eminence, whether he had taken any measures to ascertain the truth of those assertions which were to be alleged as the very basis of the petition? He also added an inquiry, whether his Eminence had found any reason to doubt the truth of the facts contained in the memorial, which he had the honor to present to him some days before?†

The Cardinal replied with evident impatience, "What is all that to the purpose? The affair is decided amongst the privy counsellors. There is nothing left but to execute it.‡"

M. Thomassin was about to speak, when the Archbishop, interrupting him with a vivacity of manner, and a voice of thunder, quite unusual to him, said, "Sir, I am giving a command, not asking advice; nor

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* See note, page 6. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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is it your place to offer it unasked. It was justly observed to me, that you were a very young man, and that it did not become me to be led by you."*

M. Thomassin again made an attempt to speak, when M. de Noailles again closed his mouth with these memorable words.

"Sir, I insist on being obeyed. Draw out the petition. It shall be done."†

To which M. Thomassin, bowing submissively, and then standing with modest firmness, in the most respectful manner replied:

"My Lord, your Eminence is resolved to do it, and Thomassin is equally resolved not to do it." Then with tears in his eyes, and much emotion (for he was sincerely attached to the Cardinal,) he continued, "No, my Lord, it shall never be said that your faithful servant Thomassin, has lent his pen to your Eminence's enemies, who only plot and combine to dishonor you."‡

Thus the interview closed.§

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* Poulain, tom. i. pp. 302, 303, 304.

† Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid. pp. 304, 305.

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On his dismissal from the Cardinal, M. Thomassin, very much agitated, repaired to his own church, which was St. Nicholas du Louvre, of which he was Provost. He immediately went and kneeled at the foot of the high altar. He staid there above an hour, during which time, though he had blasted all his worldly prospects, he declared he felt a peace which cannot be expressed; and an awful, but ineffably glorious and joyful sense of the presence of God, which pervaded his whole soul. Whilst he was there, he heard the bells ring for evening salutation; he felt so inexpressible a sense of peace and happiness, that the persons who came in to prayers, and went out, seemed to him as though he saw them in a dream: he seemed already to enjoy by a lively influence, the holy presence of God, the society of Angels, and the happiness of the Saints. He did not rise from his knees, till the dark shadows of evening scarcely shewed the white dresses of the Sisters of Charity glimmering in the remote distance; and till the last solitary lamp was extinguished; and

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though all his worldly prospects were apparently ruined, he declared that he never felt the divine presence so powerfully; that his whole soul seemed absorbed in the joy, sweetness, consolation, and tranquillity of that happy moment.*

Whilst such were the contemplations of M. Thomassin, the Cardinal de Noailles was very differently employed. It was by no means a difficult thing to find other ecclesiastics, more pliable and less conscientious than M. Thomassin; accordingly, the order was given to another person, the petition was drawn out and presented, and the destruction of Port Royal was soon after formally decreed by the council.†

On the eleventh of July, the Cardinal of Noailles passed the decree for the suppression and extinction of the Monastery of Port Royal des Champs.‡

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* See note *, page 8. † Ibid.

‡ Poulain, tom. i. p. 254. Fontaine, tom. i. p. 47. Necrol. Pref. p. 54. Clement. tom. ix. p. 414. Besogne, tom. iii. p. 188.

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On the twenty-ninth of October, of the same year, 1709, at half past seven in the morning, the nuns on coming from mass, which they had attended after prime, were gone to the chapiter, according to custom. A message was brought to the Mother Prioress, desiring her immediate attendance in the parlor. She there found a man come in great haste, from the surrounding woods, to tell her that a long file of carriages seemed proceeding towards the house, and multitudes of armed horsemen appeared on the neighbouring heights.*

A moment after, arrived M. d'Argenson, counsellor of state, and with him, a lieutenant of the police, accompanied by two commissioners, and other gentlemen; with a band of constables and archers on horseback. On entering, he ordered the key of the outward door to be given to a sentry, whom he established there. He also posted an archer at the door of the turn; one at

* Poulain, tom. i. p. 260. Clemt. ix. pp. 466, 467. Fontaine, i. p. 49. Besogne, iii. p. 193.

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the door of the church, and so on in other places, whence there might be any communication with the interior of the convent.*

Presently there appeared on all the wooded heights, which inclose the beautiful valley of Port Royal, troops of horsemen, amounting to some hundreds; and instantly the whole wall of enclosure, was on all sides invested by armed men.†

All the avenues of approach, to the distance of half a league, were guarded by armed archers on horseback.‡

The greatest part of these men, had in truth arrived the day before; at which time this expedition was originally intended to have been effected: but the weather was so unusually stormy, and the rain so violent, and so uninterrupted, that M. d'Argenson was obliged to remain at Paris, and defer it until next day.§

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* Poulain, tom. i. pp. 261, 262, 263. Besogne, tom. iii. pp. 193, 194, 195. Fontaine, tom. i. pp. 49, 50. Clement, pp. 465, 466, 467, 468.

† Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid.

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The horsemen meanwhile, had orders to keep their march a profound secret; and by no means to approach the monastery; so that they found themselves not a little embarrassed how to pass the night. They therefore dispersed in various directions; some went to lodge at Magny, whilst others found asylums for the night at Montigny, Voisins, Chevrêuse, and even as far as Dampierre.*

Many of them, not being able to obtain shelter, were compelled to remain concealed all night in the woods about Port Royal, drenched with rain, and exposed to the fury of the tremendous storms: at length however, the weather cleared, and they contrived to light a blazing fire, near which they remained till the dawn of day.†

After having posted his centinels, M. d'Argenson stopped all the servants he met; took down their respective names and offices, and at the same time commanded them not to stir from the place he appointed for them.

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* See note, page 12. † Ibid.

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He then went to the turn, and asked to speak to the Prioress, Sub-prioress, and Procuratrix.* He was conducted to the great parlor, and a moment after they appeared at the grate.†

M. d'Argenson mentioned his own name, and told them that he came authorized by his Majesty. He read to them the beginning only of the decree he came to execute; which was dated three days before, on the twenty-sixth of October, and which required of the nuns, in the King's name, that they should open their door to M. d'Argenson, and remit and deliver up to him, all their papers and title deeds.‡

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* It may be neeessary to observe to our protestant readers, that the office of *Procuratrix* is much like that of the house-keeper in a large family; or perhaps more like a union of the offices of steward and house-keeper. It is the person who keeps the stores, dispenses them in the interior of the convent, and transacts the business of the community.

† See note, page 12.

‡ Poulain, tom. i. pp. 263, 264, 265. Fontaine, tom. i. pp. 50, 51. Besogne, tom. iii. pp. 195, 196. Clement. tom. ix. pp. 468, 469.

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He then demanded entrance, to fulfil his orders. The Prioress replied, that she would immediately open the door of enclosure; and she went to the turn herself to receive him. He entered with the two commissioners, followed by a secretary, who carried a little tin box. He desired to be conducted to the chapter house, and ordered the whole community to be summoned. All the nuns then entered with their large veils let down. He counted over their number several times; then placed himself on the Abbesse's throne; the commissioners taking their seats at his sides. He then read to the community at large, so much of the decree as had been previously read to the Prioress; and added, that the farther pleasure of the King should be made known to them, after the article already recited should have been complied with.*

He then commanded all the deeds to be

* See note ‡, page 14.

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instantly delivered up to him, and asked them if they had not suppressed any.*

The Prioress answered in the negative, and said, that if he would give himself the trouble of accompanying her to the place where they were kept, she would deliver them up to him, which was accordingly done. He was then conducted to the strong closet, in which were the title deeds and archives of the monastery. He affixed his seal to it, as well as to several heavy chests, and to the strong box. During this expedition, only the Prioress, Sub-prioress, and Procuratrix were present; for the nuns hearing the hour of tierce strike, had left the chapter-house, and were gone into the choir. Little did they suspect, that it was the very last time they should ever meet there, to celebrate the praises of God. As it was Tuesday, it so happened that the Psalm for the day was the 25th. "To thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul," &c. than

* See note ‡, page 14.

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which one more appropriate to the peculiarity of their circumstances could scarcely have been found.*

Another singular coincidence also happened on the same day. The two lamps of the dormitory, which had burnt without interruption from the re-establishment of the monastery, were unaccountably both found extinguished, which had never once happened before. After Tierce, the nuns dispersed to their various obediences, or to their cells. They had however scarcely reached them, before M. d'Argenson being returned to the chapter-house, recalled the community. When they were all assembled, both the choir-nuns and likewise the lay-sisters; he told them he had reason to congratulate them on the prompt submission with which they had obeyed the King's command; but that he was, however reluctantly, constrained to declare to them the further orders of his majesty; and orders which were much more painful and rigorous

* See note ‡, page 14.

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than those they had already submitted to; and which would require, on their part, infinitely more hard sacrifices; but which, nevertheless, must be absolutely obeyed. He then ordered the remainder of the decree to be read; which purported that the King, for several reasons, on mature deliberation, and for the good of the state, ordered all the nuns of Port Royal des Champs to be immediately separated from each other; and dispersed in different religious houses, out of the diocese of Paris.*

After a pause, the Prioress said, that at least she had hoped they would have been sent two and two; being mostly aged and infirm. He replied, that could not be.†

The Prioress after another pause, then asked, how long a period would be allowed them to prepare for such a journey, in such

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* Poul. tom. i. pp. 265, 266, 267, 268, 269. Fontaine, tom. i. pp. 51, 52, 53. Besogne, tom. iii. pp. 196, 197, 198, 200. Clem. tom. ix. pp. 465, 466, 470, 471, 472, 474, 475, 476, 477, 479, 480.

† Ibid.

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a season of the year, (it was more inclement than had been known for two centuries) and for their last and final separation.*

He answered, that their separation must take place without delay. Some of the nuns replied, that they had scarcely had time to go to their cells since Mass, and that it would unavoidably take some time to put up what was indispensably necessary for their journey.†

With much difficulty, M. d'Argenson was prevailed upon to allow them half a quarter of an hour for their preparation: but added, that he should follow them, to see that they carried away no papers. He then opened the box brought by the secretary; from which he took out a paper, containing a list of the various places of their exile, and a number of double packets, ticketed, containing money to defray the expense of the journey of each nun; and another sum to pay her first quarter's board, in the convent where she was to be placed. M. d'Argen-

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* See note *, page 18. † Ibid.

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son destined Blois to the Mother Prioress herself; and then filled up the other blanks, applying to her for the names of the different nuns.*

The community meanwhile stood around, listening to their sentences in profound silence; and still keeping their large black veils let down over their faces. Neither sigh nor murmur was heard, nor did one weak tear appear to betray the dignity of their constancy, or to impeach the perfect humility of their resignation and submission to the divine will.

One indeed fainted, and another who had been bled the day before, felt her arm open; but M. d'Argenson would not suffer either of them for an instant to quit the room, till he had narrowly examined whether there were any imposture.†

At length it became necessary for the nuns to go to make up their packages. Each of these, as it was tied up, was brought into the chapter-house and ticketed. Mean-

* See note *, page 18. † Ibid.

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while the nuns staid in the chapter with the bailiffs, constables, and archers, with which it was thronged. M. d'Argenson in the mean time, standing himself in the passage to the dormitory, in order to inspect the contents of every bundle as it was handed out. The nuns were so hurried, that they had not time to take one half of what was absolutely and indispensably needful; and during the examination, several of the packets were so unsorted and mixed, that not a few went to the wrong places.*

When M. d'Argenson had finished his examination, he asked the procuratrix for her accompts. Then the nuns, who in the midst of their own extremity, never forgot their wonted beneficence; spoke to M. d'Argenson of their old servants, most of whom had long and faithfully served them, from early youth even to hoary hairs; they also recommended to him the poor;

* Poul. i. pp. 269, 270, 271, 272. Besogne, iii. pp. 201, 202. Clem. ix. pp. 471, 472, 473, 475. Font. i. pp. 53, 54, 55.

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as well as some old domestics and others, who being past labor, were maintained by the house; the Prioress asking him how he proposed to provide for their latter days? M. d'Argenson replied, "that it was vexatious; but it would be time enough to consider of that, when they were gone." Saying this, he took the keys of enclosure, and put them in the hands of an archer. He then again entered the chapter-house, followed by a troop of bailiffs and archers, amounting to above thirty; who with those already there, completely filled the room.*

Besides these, there were others in the outer court guarding the servants, without counting the numbers who invested the whole wall of enclosure, the hills, and all the avenues of approach; so that there were nearly three hundred men armed and mounted, merely to disperse a few nuns.†

The nuns, seeing they were now so near finally quitting their beloved seclusion, no human help being at hand, and no pitying

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* See note, page 21. † Ibid.

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eye turned to them, and the archers and bailiffs now fast thronging in upon them, finally to disperse them, some of them approaching their Prioress, said to her, "What, my dear Mother, shall we quit our home without once protesting, or making any legal act of appeal?" She replied, "My dear daughters, as all is done by the authority of lettres-de-cachets, there remains no legal power of appeal. Our path then is clear; to submit with resignation." They then with one accord, threw themselves at her feet to implore her blessing, tenderly embraced her, and said no more.*

During this time, M. d'Argenson was giving the necessary orders for their speedy departure. It was now near one o'clock, and not any of their community had yet broken their fast. The Prioress represented this to the magistrate, and asked him whether it would not be well for them to go a few minutes into the refectory. "No, no," replied he, "but you can bring something

* See note, page 21.

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here." Some bread and wine were then brought into the chapter-house; but nobody would touch it except one nun, whom M. d'Argenson absolutely constrained to take some, because she was in the most urgent want of it.*

Till this time the carriages had remained without. The lieutenant of the police then gave orders they should drive in; the court was immediately full of carriages, archers, soldiers, and bailiffs.†

Meanwhile, all the surrounding villages and neighbourhood had been alarmed at so unusual a movement; and the farmers, villagers, cottagers, and poor, had all hastened to watch, though at a distance, what was doing; so that the heights of all the surrounding hills were thronged with an immense concourse of all ages and descrip-

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* See note, page 21.

† Poul. i. pp. 272, 273. Besogne, iii. pp. 203, 208. Clem. ix. pp. 486, 489, 473, 474, 483, 484, 525, 527, 528, 529. Fontaine, i. pp. 55, 56, 57, 58. Clem. x. p. 299.

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tions, more especially by the poor, who for above a century had been indebted to the charity of Port Royal. All this multitude awaited in silent curiosity and expectation the developement of the extraordinary scene before them.*

As soon, however, as the empty carriages drove into the yard, one universal cry of sorrow and indignation was raised. The poor rushed down in troops; some weeping, and exclaiming they were about to deprive them of their nursing mothers, and beseeching they might be left; others thronging to see their faces once more; some howling dreadfully; others silently throwing themselves on their knees, and looking up to heaven, as though to call for aid: others, again, with mournful cries and frantic gestures, shrieking, "Mercy, mercy, have mercy on the poor! do you intend to starve the poor, by taking away their mothers and their only refuge?"†

Their lamentations, however, were vain.

* See note †, page 24.

† Ibid. and also Manuel du Pel, p. 58.

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The nuns were at length compelled to go. The Prioress, with a calmness and resignation which was the gift of God, lost not for a moment her presence of mind. No mark of weakness escaped her. She staid till the last; and as M. d'Argenson himself led each nun to the carriage, she gave to each her last blessing, and a word of seasonable exhortation and consolation."*

Carriage after carriage then filed off, each with an armed escort, through the lines of poor, who, loudly sobbing, bid them farewel with frantic grief; or kneeling, with uplifted and streaming eyes, implored a blessing on them. Twelve carriages thus went, destined to Blois, Rouen, Chartres, Mantes, Meaux, Amiens, Compeigne, Autun, Mont Cenis, and other places.†

All the servants, who had been detained captive the whole day, were then turned out of doors, without provision, shelter, or reward. To one very aged man, indeed,

* See note †, page 24. † Ibid.

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who had faithfully served the nuns gratuitously, they gave *twenty-five pence*, the only remuneration for fifty years' service.*

We will now follow the nuns to their various exiles. The first carriage which departed was that of Autun. It conveyed the sister SAINT SOPHIA OF FLESCELLES, and sister LUCY OF ST. PEPIN. The first, on stepping into the carriage, bade one more adieu to her sisters, saying, "My dear sisters, let us above all arm ourselves with that invincible shield of faith, which is able to quench every fiery dart." The wife of one of the bailiffs accompanied them by way of attendant and guard. She declared, that instead of letting drop one single murmuring word, the nuns immediately disposed themselves to prayer. They experienced many inconveniences on the road,

* Font. i. pp. 55, 56, 58. Poul. pp. 272, 273. Besogne, iii. pp. 203, 206, 207, 228. Clem. ix. pp. 491, 492, 493, 494. Clem. x. pp. 288, 289, 290, 291. Necrol. Supp. pp. 345, 346, 347. Besogne, iii. pp. 268, 269, 270, 271. Clem. x. pp. 85, 86, 131.

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not only from the hardships necessarily attendant on the severity of the season, but from the rigor of M. d'Argenson's orders; amongst others, they were refused attendance on divine worship, and on their arrival at the inns, immediately put under lock and key. In reply to the rudeness with which the guards, who accompanied the carriage, performed their office, the sister Lucy of St. Pepin mildly answered, "My Saviour has been a prisoner before me, and that for our salvation: I bless God for vouchsafing me the favor of having any, the least part, in his lot, or fellowship with him in his sufferings."*

At length they arrived at the monastery of the visitation, where the sister LUCY OF ST. PEPIN was to stay, and where those who received her as a prisoner soon learnt to honor her as a saint.†

The next day, the two nuns had a painful sacrifice to make, in finally separating

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* See note, page 27. † Ibid.

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from each other, as the sister SAINT SOPHIA OF FLESCELLES was going on farther to Mont Cenis.*

They took the most affectionate and affecting leave of each other, as persons expecting to meet no more on this side of eternity; and solemnly exhorting each other to be faithful even to the end. They then separated; the sister Sophia continuing her journey to Mont Cenis, where, after passing through many trials and vexations, Madame de Rosebureau, the Abbesse, declared "that Providence had bestowed on them his best gift, in the example of their dear sister of Port Royal, whose conduct had been a source of edification to the whole house."†

Afterwards, two other carriages went for St. Denis, with lay-sisters, who were however almost immediately translated to other convents. The hardships, mal-treatment, and anxiety these nuns underwent, joined to their advanced age, and the inclemency

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* See note, page 27. † Ibid.

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of the season, occasioned the death of the greater part at the end of a very short period. Others lived several years, setting a bright example of Christian and monastic virtues, and after undergoing various persecutions, died in the odour of sanctity, leaving their memories in benediction in the very houses in which they had suffered.*

The fourth carriage departed for Amiens It contained the sister ANNE OF ST. CECILIA DE BOISCERVOISE, aged eighty-one years, and sister MAGDALENE OF ST. CECILIA BERTRAND. The first of these nuns was amongst the number of those who were imprisoned forty-one years before, in the persecution of 1664. She had accompanied the Abbesse Madame Ligny in her banishment, and having experienced the hardship of an exile, she had peculiarly feared the dispersion. Owing to the badness of the weather, the roads were almost impracticable; and after great inconve-

* See note, page 27.

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nience, the carriage was finally overturned, and the nuns very much hurt. The sister Anne of St. Cecilia was taken exceedingly ill in consequence of her fatigue. They arrived late in the evening on the 20th at Amiens; a physician was sent for at eleven that night, as the nun appeared in the most urgent extremity; she however lived four days longer; when, notwithstanding the continual persecutions with which she was assailed on her death-bed, she expired in perfect peace, trusting on the mercy of God, through the merits of Christ.*

On the last day of her life, Madame de Boiscervoise called for her breviary; and taking out of it a little print of the great Arnauld, looked at it, and then put it in the fire, carefully looking till it was entirely consumed. "I always have honored M. Arnauld," she then said to her jailers: "I entertain to my last moments for his memory the high respect and consideration

* Poulain, i. p. 273. Besogne, iii. pp. 203, 199, 206, 207, 228. Clement, ix. pp. 502, 503, 505.

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he deserves; and if I now burn his portrait, it is not that my views are altered, but as a necessary precaution lest it should fall into unworthy hands!"

Next to the carriages for Amiens, succeeded two for Chartres. The sister AGATHA LE JUGE, who went in one of them, had, as it was observed before, been lately bled; which, with the agitation she underwent, made her so ill, that she was unable to stand; but was carried into the coach, and supported by pillows. There were also two lay-sisters sent to Chartres; one of them was a cripple; she had passed many years without wearing shoes or stockings, and had restricted herself in food, in order to be able to give more to the poor. She was so ill, as to be obliged to be put into the carriage, wrapped up in a blanket; she scarcely lived to reach the place of her destination.*

Then followed the seventh carriage to Nevers, containing sister FRANCES MAG-

* See note, page 31.

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DALENE OF ST. IDE VAVASOUR, and sister MARIA OF ST. ANNE COURTURIER. Each were to be taken to Nevers, and placed in a separate convent of Ursulines. They were conducted so carelessly, that the carriage was overturned, and thrown from the causeway, upon a sort of ditch or morass below. The nuns were dreadfully bruised, and dragged out of the slough into which the carriage was overturned, covered with mud, so that they were obliged to strip off their nuns' dresses and put on secular clothes. They at length arrived very late at their place of destination, where they found such a prevention was entertained against them, that it was a very considerable time before the Abbesses would take them in.*

There were still four carriages to go. The first was that of Rouen; which was to convey the sister ANNE JULIA OF ST. SYNCLETICA DE REMICOURT, the Sub-prioress of Port Royal, to the priory of Bellefond,

* Compare Clem. tom. ix. pp. 511, 512, with Fontaine, tom. i. p. 58, and Besogne, tom. iii. p. 206.

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of the order of St. Bennet. Such were the prejudices against the nuns of Port Royal, that when she arrived, they would not open the doors; so that after a most fatiguing and anxious journey, in the midst of November, the carriage was obliged to wait in the night for some hours; till at length M. d'Aubigné, Archbishop of Rouen, being applied to, sent word to the Abbesse, that she and her community could not possibly dispense themselves from obeying the King's commands.*

The Abbesse Madame de St. Pierre, with the utmost ill-will and reluctance, was then compelled to let Madame de Remicourt enter. She did not, however, receive her into the convent, but immediately confined her under lock and key in a small garden-house, separated from the rest of the monastery. Here she was so closely confined, that for years she only saw the lay-sister who fed her. No nun was allowed to speak to her. She was deprived of all public of-

* Clem. tom. ix. p. 512, also Bes. iii. p. 274.

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fices of worship, and wholly interdicted the use of books, pens, ink, or paper; and, horrible to relate, of either fire or candle, and that during the severest winter France had experienced for two whole centuries; nor was she allowed to have any air, but what came in at the chimney. Still, however, her faith failed not. It was of this nun that the Archbishop said to the Abbesse, Madame de St. Pierre, "You may persecute, but you never will alter Madame de Remicourt; she has a square head, and persons with square heads are always obstinate and decided."*

The lay-sister who attended this innocent and truly pious Sub-prioress, sincerely pitied her, but durst not bring her any fuel from the kitchen; she, however, entreated the boarders in the convent, and the scholars, to put out the charcoal of their stoves before it was quite burnt, and to give it to her. This she did, without telling the young ladies what she meant to do with it,

* Clem. tom. ix. pp. 513, 514, 515, 516.

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which was to take it to Madame de Remicourt. The young ladies concluded the lay-sister meant to give it to the poor; but they soon found out the use to which this compassionate nun applied it; as she was discovered by the Abbesse, and obliged to do penance in consequence.*

Soon after, the Abbesse came down one day at the hour of recreation, and after conversing familiarly with the scholars, she began by exalting the advantages and pleasures of the monastic state, and asked them whether they should not like to be nuns in her convent? Most of the scholars answered according to the views of the Abbesse; but one young lady, about fifteen, who afterwards proved a very eminently Christian character, decidedly answered, "No, madam, I would not upon any account enter this convent." "And pray why, my dear sister?" inquired the Abbesse. "Because, Madam," returned the young lady, "both yourself and your nuns

* See note, page 35.

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are totally deficient in Christian charity." The Abbesse, astonished, demanded an explanation. The young lady then pointing to the prison of the Sub-prioress of Port Royal, told her, there was in that prison a nun, who had been confined for a long time, who was never admitted to the consolations of public worship; who received no visits of charity or compassion; who was never seen but by the lay-sister who fed her, and never allowed to come out for a moment to take the air. "Even wild beasts," continued the young lady, "have their different apartments, that they may be aired by their keepers, who exhibit them; but you, madam, a nun, a religious in profession, refuse this indulgence to a human being. Moreover, this nun has been totally deprived of fire during the whole winter, which has been very long, and of unexampled severity." "Pray how do you know that?" inquired the Abbesse. "Because, Madam," replied the young lady, "fire cannot burn without smoke; now no smoke has escaped this winter from the

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chimney of that prison. In short, Madam, you will, I am persuaded, find it difficult to cite an instance of a barbarian and a heathen who treats his captive enemies as you, Madam, a native of the most civilized nation in the world, and a professor of the highest perfection of the Christian religion, treat a lady, your country-woman by birth, your superior by rank, your sister by religious profession, and, Madam, your example by sanctity; for assuredly a very eminent degree of sanctity alone could have preserved this lady, under an excess of inhumanity, which would have driven any merely common religious professor to despair."*

The Abbesse completely abashed, and severely mortified, in vain endeavoured to excuse herself; alledging the royal mandate and the authority of the Archbishop. But all the rest of the scholars now taking part with the young lady, the Abbesse, utterly confounded, was obliged to withdraw.

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* See note, page 35.

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Next day she gave the sister of Saint Synclètica leave to walk out for an hour, at the time of the recreation, with the young ladies. The permission was continued for walking every day afterwards, with leave to have a fire, and to attend divine service, though in a tribune alone.*

Thus, whilst M. de Noailles, a Cardinal of the holy college, and the Archbishop of the metropolitan church, through weakness, suffered religion to be trampled under foot; a child, by firmly espousing the side of religion and humanity, had the consolation of being able to mitigate the sufferings of a saint, and to stem alone the torrent of her persecutors.

Madame de Remicourt was treated afterwards with less inhuman severity, though she did not obtain more liberty.†

Next to the carriages for Rouen, followed one for Compiegne, conveying the sisters APPOLLINA LE BEGUE, and another nun, who were placed in two religious houses,

* See note, page 35. † Clem. tom. ix. p. 516.

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under the immediate direction of the Jesuits, from whom they suffered grievously; till at length, wearied with tormenting them, their director voluntarily declared, "that in all cases they shewed such an humble fear of displeasing God, that for his part he could not but bitterly regret the destruction of a house, whose inhabitants were so eminently holy."*

Then followed a carriage to Meaux, conveying the sister MARY OF ST. CATHERINE ISSALI, procuratrix of Port Royal, and the sister MARY CATHERINE ST. CELINIA BENOISE. The first suffered dreadfully from a dislocation of both hips, so that she could neither kneel nor rise without assistance. She had suffered from this malady for years; but such was her benevolence, that she used to cause herself to be carried to a couch near a table, where she busied herself from morning till night, with indefatigable industry, making clothes for the poor, and mixing up medicines and oint-

* Clem. ix. p. 517.

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ments, and bleeding those who required it, with the greatest dexterity. When this sister arrived, neither her grievous infirmity, nor the hardships she had consequently suffered in her journey, could induce the convent to shew her the humanity of taking her in; it was only by a positive order from the Bishop that she was at length admitted into a society, from which she had to experience the harshest treatment.*

Last of all, and not much before five o'clock in the evening, went the carriage for Blois, conveying the Reverend Mother Prioress, LOUISA OF ST. ANASTASIA DU MESNIL DE COURTIAUX, and the sister FRANCES AGNES OF ST. MARTHA. The destination of the first was to the Ursulines of Blois; that of the latter, to the Canonesses of the same city. During the whole of the afflicting scene which she had witnessed, the Reverend Mother Prioress had equally exhibited the deep feeling of the Mother of a large community, the resignation of a

* Clem. ix. p. 518.

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Christian, and the dignity of mind and force of character which peculiarly distinguished herself. Every nun, before she entered the carriage, had first devoutly knelt at the foot of the altar of the sacrament, offering herself as a sacrifice to her Saviour, and then returning to the chapiter, threw herself at the feet of the Prioress, to ask her blessing.*

However sensibly the reverend Mother felt these adieus, she supported them with the same dignity and constancy to the end. She most tenderly embraced each of the nuns, and then, not to weaken them too much, she only said, "My very dear sisters, be faithful to your rule, to your conscience, and to your God, who is able to maintain you in both, through the fiery trial of affliction." The nuns, on the other hand, bid her and each other adieu, till they should meet in a happy eternity; they asked pardon of each other, for all the pain

* Clem. ix. pp. 520, 521, 522. Bes. iii. pp. 204 and 207. Clem. ix. pp. 480, 483.

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they might have mutually given; and animating each other with a lively faith, an ardent charity, and a firm hope, they recommended themselves to their Mother's and to each other's prayers, declaring, that being united in heart in God, and for God, they could not fail to find Port Royal every where. When the sister Isalli, the procuratrix, was going, she remembered that on settling the accounts, the convent had still four hundred francs in hand; she therefore desired this sum might be given to the poor; but the archers having seized the purse, divided it amongst themselves.*

Even M. d'Argenson appeared both deeply impressed and touched by the conduct of the Prioress. He treated her with the greatest respect, always styling her the reverend Mother. He appointed the Provost of the Marechaussée himself, with six horsemen, to accompany her carriage, and repeatedly recommended him to shew every possible respect and attention to the reve-

* Bes. iii. p. 204. Clem. ix. pp. 483, 481, Note.

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rend Mother Prioress. Indeed the whole company appeared impressed with equal respect and esteem for one, who could shew at once such unshaken firmness, and such profound submission to orders so rigorous.*

Like the venerable mother of the Maccabees, her courage never once failed in that terrible day, in which her children were all severed from her. As it was so late in the evening, she lodged that night at Versailles. It was not till the fourth of November that both the prisoners arrived at Blois. Being early in the day, M. d'Auvergne, the Provost of the Marechaussée, wished to send them each immediately to her respective convent. But they having requested the favor of spending a few hours more together, before their final separation, he kindly consented. The rest of the evening and that night they chiefly spent in prayer, and in exhorting each other to resignation and constancy. †

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* Clem. ix. pp. 520, 521, 522. Bes. iii. p. 207.

† Ibid.

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The next day the Prioress accompanied sister Frances of St. Martha to her convent of the Veronicans, before she went to her own. Here they spent a short time in conversation. The Prioress then rose to take her final leave. The sister of St. Martha threw herself at her Prioress's feet, to implore her last benediction. The Prioress gave it in the most solemn and affecting manner. She then raised her and embraced her, bidding her "Be faithful to the end." In this manner they separated, never to meet again in this world.*

The Mother Prioress was then conducted to the Ursulines, where she was closely guarded and imprisoned, but where her unshaken constancy and eminent piety at length extorted the highest esteem, veneration, and admiration of the whole community, though without ever abating any thing of the very rigorous treatment they made her endure without intermission, till

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* Bes. tom. iii. p. 207. Clem. ix. p. 522. Fontaine, i. p. 60.

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death put her in possession of the crown of life laid up for those who are faithful to the end.*

The last nun at Port Royal was the sister MARY ST. EUPHRASIA ROBERT; she was paralytic, which, joined to her extreme age, (for she was almost ninety), had not only deprived her of the powers of reading, writing, and walking, but even of the use of her reason. Nay, it was even thought she had too little consciousness to be sensible of what was going on at the time of the dispersion. To their great surprize, however, whilst to all appearance stupidly gazing on the scene before her, she suddenly raised her head, and turning to M. d'Argenson, mildly but firmly said, "Sir, to-day is the hour of man; but that of the judgment of God will soon, and will certainly arrive."†

She was sent away next morning, but

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* Fontaine, i. p. 60. Clem. ix. p. 522.

† Clem. ix. p. 522, 523. Bea. iii. p. 206. Fontaine, i. p. 58.

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suffered so severely on her journey, that her death was expected the day of her arrival at the place of her destination; she, however, survived it a few weeks.

The servants of Port Royal were not more kindly treated than the nuns. No sooner was the Prioress gone, than M. d'Argenson began to dismiss the servants, who had been detained close prisoners the whole day. In vain did they represent to him, that it was now evening; that there was scarcely half an hour's day-light, and that they did not know where to go. It availed them nothing; they were turned out that night, and obliged to go where they could, and to seek shelter in the villages around.*

The next day the servants returned for their clothes and their own furniture; but all their packets had been visited, and they were only able to take what the rapacity of the archers allowed them; this indeed was not much.†

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* Bes. iii. pp. 208, 209, 210. Clem. ix. pp. 523, 527, 528, 529. † Ibid.

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The archers, seeing that the greatest number of the servants had many books of piety, without scruple treated them as thieves, telling them in the most opprobrious language, that they must have stolen them from the nuns.*

Several of the most aged and faithful servants, having outlived their relatives, and being past their labor, were compelled to seek a miserable shelter at the Hotel Dieu. Here they were respected as persons whose eminent piety sufficiently declared the school in which they had been educated. After suffering the extremities of poverty, they died in holiness amongst the poor, after having lived in holiness amongst saints. Such, however, was their distress, that the curate of the parish being called in to administer the last sacraments to one of them, could not restrain his tears on seeing the condition to which she had been reduced.†

Such was the close of the monastery of

* See note, page 47. † Ibid.

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Port Royal des Champs. Thus terminated a house, so eminently blessed by God; a house, which for more than a century, had diffused the odour of life throughout the Christian church, and the word of God throughout the land. This rare institution, in its existence diffused an example of holiness; in its destruction, one of martyrdom. What shall we say? God raised up this rare assemblage of virtues and talents in an age which was not worthy. He bid it arise, like a great light, in a land which sat in great darkness and in the shadow of death; but men preferred darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. God therefore removed their candlestick in wrath from a crooked generation; and in permitting Port Royal to be immolated to the faith, he preserved it from that relaxation, which often succeeds to dishonor the most splendid works. Port Royal is no more; but its memory is in benediction, its works shall be in everlasting remembrance. This permission of God, which is inscrutable to flesh and blood, is considered

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by the eyes of faith the summit and crown of all God's mercies to this holy institution.*

To return to our narrative, M. d'Argenson sent a special messenger to Versailles, to inform the King and Madame de Maintenon (who was a chief mover in this affair) that the expedition was completed.†

M. d'Argenson himself remained some time at Port Royal, to arrange all business relating to it. Whilst he was there, the monastery was completely ransacked by an ecclesiastic, who was brother to the Bishop of Bellay. He pryed into every corner, emptying all the drawers, chests, and closets, and turning out their contents on the floor; which was the means of wonderful depredation, every one pillaging at pleasure.‡

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* Clem. ix. p. 529.

† Clem. ix. p. 524. Poulain, i. pp. 273, 274. Fontaine, i. p. 61.

‡ Poulain, i. pp. 274, 275, 276, 277, 278. Besogne, iii. pp. 210, 211, 212, 213. Fontaine, i. pp. 62, 63. Clem. ix. pp. 536 to 542.

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All the obediences likewise were put into complete disorder. Obedience is the name given to those rooms containing the materials for the different kinds of works in which nuns are employed. And as the community had formerly been so numerous, there were a great many of these obediences at Port Royal. As for example, obediences for the linen, the robery, the mattresses, the bedding, the furniture, the drugs, the apothecary's shop, the church ornaments and vestments, the fruitery, the locksmith's, the shoe warehouse, the weaving looms; obediences for glazing, for oil, for wax, for candles, for the library, for book-binding, for book-mending, for the clothes of the poor, and for the clothes of poor children under seven years old.*

In this scene of devastation, the new comers being unacquainted with the keys, in order to save time, burst open the doors, forced open the closets, turned out all to

* See note ‡, page 50.

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the right and left, and in the indecency of their research, did not even desist from the unheard of outrage of prying into the apartments of secular persons, who boarded in private rooms in the convent.*

Not long after, the monastery underwent a second pillage. Madame de Chateau Renaud, the usurping Abbesse of PORT ROYAL DE PARIS, came in the beginning of December to seize upon the spoil of Port Royal des Champs, and took away the provisions, clothes, furniture, and church ornaments.†

The provisions were considerable, because the nuns were in the habit of laying in large supplies, in the seasons in which they were cheap; so great was the spirit of order and œconomy for which this house was distinguished, in temporal as well as in spiritual affairs. As it was the time to lay in a stock of wax, there was likewise a prodigious quantity of it, and of candles, potted butter, hogsheads of prunes, grains,

* See note ‡, page 50. † Ibid.

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eggs, olive oil, nut oil, salt, and fire wood. All the linen of the noviciate likewise remained, as well as a large quantity of coverlets, mattresses, nuns' robes, sewing thread, packthread, mill puff for mattresses, and white stuff for stockings. There was likewise a very fine piece of Gobelin tapestry, presented to them by Mademoiselle des Virtus, to serve at the procession of the holy sacrament.*

The usurping Abbess remained three weeks at Port Royal, during which time she sent to the house at Paris above an hundred cart loads of effects and provisions, that remained after the pillage, besides what was sold on the spot.†

It was not long before they proceeded to the demolition of the monastery. Madame de Chateau Renaud obtained by the credit of Madame de Maintenon a decree of the twelfth of January, 1710, ordering the total demolition of the house, which,

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* See note ‡, page 50. † Ibid.

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exclusive of the church, had cost above 63,625 livres to build.*

This intention, however, was not carried into execution until the succeeding year; when the demolition of the monastery was so complete, that it might almost be said, as of Jerusalem of old, that not one stone was left standing upon another.†

Before the destruction of the monastery, M. d'Argenson learnt that Mademoiselle Horthemels, daughter to a bookseller in Paris, had engraved a series of plates; representing the church, choir, refectory, cloisters, and various other views of Port Royal des Champs. He immediately sent and had all the impressions seized; as well as the copper-plates from which they had been worked off. Her mother having laid a complaint before the magistrate, he declared, that his Majesty having ordered the demo-

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* Poulain, i. pp. 281, 282, 283, 284, 285. Clemt. tom. x. pp. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. Besogne, iii. pp. 214, 215, 216, 217.

† Ibid.

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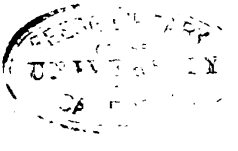
lition of the monastery, no representation of it should have been taken or preserved.*

Meanwhile, the church of Port Royal had not been included in the decree for the destruction of the house; but about the end of 1710, another decree was obtained, for the compleat destruction of all that remained. In the year 1711, accordingly, the church was destroyed; and the exhumation of the bodies took place at the end of the same year, and in the beginning of 1712.†

In the interval which elapsed between the destruction of the monastery and the exhumation, several families to protect the remains of their friends from outrage, amidst the threatening tempest; besought, and obtained permission, to remove the bodies of their relatives, interred at Port Royal des Champs; and to give them a private, but decent burial elsewhere. Accordingly six bodies of the Arnauld family, and also that of M. de Tillemont, M. Ra-

* See note, page 54. † Ibid.



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cine, those of Messrs. le Maitre, de Sacy, and a very few more, were transported elsewhere.*

The multitude of bodies, however, which still remained at Port Royal des Champs, continued undisturbed till the end of 1711. At that period the Cardinal de Noailles committed the superintendence of the exhumation, to an ecclesiastic of the name of Le Doux; who acquitted himself of his commission in the most shameful and scandalous manner. The operation, far from being conducted with the respect due to the sanctity of the deceased; or even with the mere decency which any occasion of the sort may demand; was committed to a set of laborers and grave-diggers, of the most profligate description; who prepared themselves by intoxication, for the disagreeable task imposed upon them. They were at the time of the exhumation, in a compleat state of inebriety; the whole business was

* See note, page 54. also Manuel du Pelerinage de Port Royal, pp. 1 to 4, 63 to 65, 80, 49 and 50.

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carried on with the most scandalous indecency; and amidst the most profligate jests, vociferation, and blasphemy. The bodies had been interred in various places. Some had been buried in the body of the church, others in the choir, many in the cloisters, a great multitude in the external churchyard, whilst others had been interred in the internal burying ground; which was more particularly appropriated to the nuns. The earth was opened in all these different places. The bones were taken out and carried to the chapter-house. Some of the bodies taken out of the earth were entirely decayed; others were half consumed, many remained entire; these, the grave-diggers seldom took the trouble to dig up whole; but hacking and hewing them in pieces, tore off the flesh and mangled limbs piecemeal, throwing them in one vast heap, where the decayed bones, the putrid and dissolving corpses, and the mangled and bloody limbs and remains, were promiscuously piled one upon another, in one vast

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charnel, in order to be afterwards transported in carts elsewhere.*

But a vast multitude of bodies were found which were unconsumed; of this number were three, which even to their very dress, remained as compleat and entire, as when committed to the grave. One was that of a priest in his sacerdotal vestments; another that of Laisné, a servant to the house, who died about two years before; and the third was that of the Mother BOULARD DE NINVILLIERS, the last Abbesse of Port Royal, who died in the year 1706.†

On the remnant of all these bodies, whether consumed or entire, was exercised the most revolting and infamous brutality; and the most indecent profanation of the

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* Poulain, i. p. 286 to 289. Bes. iii. p. 217 to 222. Clem. x. p. 28 to 32. Necrol. Pref. pp. 55, 56, and tom. ii. pp. 406, 407, 408. Ruines de Port Royal, p. 34. Racine, Hist. Eccles. tom. xi. pp. 468, 469. Manuel du Pelge de Port Royal, 49.

† Ibid.

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common feelings of humanity. The grave-diggers still drinking, to qualify themselves for their work, amidst a thousand blasphemous speeches tore these venerable remains to pieces; hewing off the limbs and heads with their spades or pickaxes, in order to compress them piecemeal into some old packing cases, dragging them along to the chapter, where they were thrown into the common heap. Two gentlemen, who were hunting in the woods of Port Royal, happened to pass by at the time these brutalities were perpetrating; curiosity led them to turn aside, knowing that the exhumation was about to take place, to see what was going forward. They entered the church, where they saw a body exhumated, as entire as if it had been only just buried. It was dressed in a surplice, between the hands was placed a small wooden crucifix, a divine peace still sat upon the countenance. The grave-diggers instantly stripped it, dragged it by the feet, all the length of the church, to the chapter-house: then with hoes and pick-axes rudely tore in pieces the

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body, and defaced that venerable countenance which even death had respected.*

The body of Madame Boulard, the last Abbesse, also appeared not as if dead, but as if in a tranquil sleep; or as it has been described, her face wore still the placidity of Christian benignity, amidst the deep solemnity of death. When that of John Laisné was found, the workmen recognizing him to whose kindness they, as well as the other poor, had often been indebted; brutally exclaimed, "Ah, ah, Laisné, so there thou art again!" But we must draw a veil over the scene of horrors that ensued.†

We shall simply say, their bodies were at length transported to the common heap. The single idea of such a spectacle outrages both religion and nature itself. What must the eye-witnesses have experienced, at unexpectedly beholding this prodigious pile of bones, and half bleeding, half putrescent bodies of above three thousand corpses,

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* See note, page 58. † Ibid.

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which it was computed were buried there, promiscuously heaped together. Indeed, the multitude was immense. Since the reform only, which had then subsisted above a century, there were always some hundred nuns in the house, besides priests, recluses, servants, and a vast multitude of pious friends who desired burial there. Such were the venerable characters, whose remains were thus cast out with indignity; whilst multitudes of hungry dogs, assembled by the horrible and pestilential gales, which blew over this scene of carnage, were seen on all sides assembling round the grave-diggers, tearing the putrid or bleeding flesh, snarling and contending for the mangled limbs, or foul and besmeared with gore, gnawing the bones, or sleeping, glutted, amidst their prey.*

Such was the mode, in which the exhumation of the bodies of the saints of Port Royal was conducted. When it was finished, they transported this vast mass of inform

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* See note, page 58.

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remnants of hewn and mangled corpses, in carts to the church of St. Lambert; where one vast sepulchre, or rather pit, was dug, into which they were promiscuously thrown. To compleat the indecency of this most scandalous scene; it is related, that in the jolting of the carts, which were piled up very high, many of their contents occasionally tumbled out, so that the road from Port Royal to St. Lambert, might be traced by the bleeding remnants of human bodies, occasionally scattered the whole way. The piety of passengers and the surrounding villagers, gave to these remains a burial, on the very parts of the road where they fell. The pit into which the rest of the bodies were thrown, was dug on the south side of the church of St. Lambert. At each corner of this grave was placed a large stone, like a curb stone, separating it from the rest of the church-yard; and in the centre was placed another, on which the friends of Port Royal erected a wooden cross; which mark of respect, trivial as it was, was all they were allowed to shew.

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This cross, however, was very soon obliged to be renewed. The young, whom the saints of Port Royal had instructed; the old, whom they had consoled; the poor, they had helped; and the friends, whom in the slippery paths of worldly greatness, they had guided; all were frequent in their visits to the desolate remains of Port Royal, and to the church-yard of St. Lambert; and, excluded from the church by the ecclesiastic who officiated, the church-yard and the scite of the monastery became a place of meditation and prayer; and few out of the number visited these sacred spots, without taking away a piece of the ruins of Port Royal, or a chip of the cross erected over the remains of her saints. Truly might it have been said, "Thy servants think upon her stones; her very dust is precious in their eyes."*

In fine, to compleat all, many of the tomb-stones of the nuns, which were large lozenges, either of black marble or of lias

* See note, page 58.

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stone, have been discovered in taverns and smoking houses of the lowest description, for several leagues round Port Royal; where they have been used either for pavement, or for drinking tables. A magistrate, well known for his piety, had the devotion to save one of them from profanation. Having found it in the yard of an inn, where it had not yet been used, he bought it, and respectfully kept it as a remembrance of the saints of Port Royal.*

Soon after the exhumation, the walls of the church of Port Royal were blown up with gunpowder, and the timber and carpenter's work torn down, and sold to the best bidder. Truly might it be said of these Harpies, that not content with devouring Jacob, they had filled his dwelling place with desolation. Not long after this, the Archbishop of Beaumont, tore up almost the very last remnants of this monastery; and to blot out all remembrance of a spot whose light had gone forth to the whole world, and whose good works had left an

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* See note, page 58.

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indelible impression on the hearts of men, he used the principal part of the stone-work of the building in making an aqueduct. Thus has the fury of the enemies of Port Royal been often compared to that of the children of Edom against Jerusalem, "O God! the Heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy Holy Temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem a heap of stones. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the air, and the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the land."—*Psalm* 79. "They said, down with Jerusalem, down with it even to the ground."*

Such was the untimely fate of the monastery of Port Royal; but in vain was the voice of ecclesiastical authority raised to defend the deed it had urged the temporal power, and even the regal sanction, to perpetrate. One universal voice of execration arose from every quarter; and all France looked with abhorrence upon an

* See note, page 58.

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outrage which equally stigmatized the professors of religion who had planned it, and the royal authority which had so outstretched its just prerogative as to assist in its execution. And whilst so intolerant a bigotry, and so arbitrary an exercise of power, was looked upon with horror by the vast body of the truly religious in the Gallican Church, and by the truly enlightened in all countries, the fears of the superstitious did not fail to observe, that this event was succeeded by a period of immediate, sudden, and almost unexampled disasters to France. Scarcely had the monarch, who sat on the throne, demolished Port Royal, when that throne, firm as it then appeared, was shaken to its very foundation.—The Grand Dauphin, the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, the Duke of Brittany, the three successive heirs to the crown, were struck by death, sudden, awful, and inexplicable; and France was left with an aged and decrepid old man at her head, surrounded by triumphant enemies. The victories of Hochstet, Ra-

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millies, and Malplaquet, rapidly succeeded each other; Tournay, Lisle, Mons, and Douay, opened their gates to the enemy. Louis the Fourteenth, in an evil hour, had, by the intrigues of the ambitious woman he married, consented to oppress true religion equally in his Protestant subjects, by signing the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; and in his Catholic subjects, by the banishment of the Saint of Cambray, and the destruction of Port Royal; and Louis the Fourteenth, whose brilliant successes, alike in arts as in arms, had obtained him the vain title of GREAT, died, not even leaving to his nation the empty laurels, which might have speciously concealed the naked poverty to which he had reduced them.*

It was also remarked, that, on the day of the exhumation of the bodies, a violent tempest burst upon the district; and, on the day fixed for the translation of the re-

* Poulain, tom. i. pp. 289, 290, 291. Clemencet, tom. x. pp. 32, 33 to 42. Besogne, iii. pp. 222, 223.

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mains to St. Lambert, a most tremendous storm took place; so that the expedition was obliged to be deferred for several days. It indeed extended over all France, but more particularly in the district of Versailles and Port Royal, in which all the fruit trees were demolished. It was also observed, that the winter of 1709 was severe and rigorous beyond precedent; nor did persons fail to conclude this catalogue of disasters by observing, that scarcely had Madame de Chateau-Rênaud seized the spoil of Port Royal des Champs, when she was struck, in the midst of her usurpation, with sudden death. She died without sacraments; and if at the last moment, God in mercy visited her heavy-laden soul with the grace of repentance, no time was allowed to manifest its sincerity to men. She died, and gave no sign; and both the temporal and spiritual state of her monastery was, at her dissolution, found in the greatest disorder.*

* Poulain, tom. i. pp. 289, 290, 291. Clemencet,

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Having now pursued the desolation of the monastery to the last stage and term of ruin, it is time to return to the nuns; and following them in their various retreats, to trace the effects of the faith of which they had been made blessed partakers, upon the short remnant of their lives.

The captive nuns had, as we before observed, been generally received in the most unworthy manner by the houses into which they had been transferred. They were at first looked upon as lost reprobates, with whom it was dangerous to hold any communication; they were therefore immured in their own cells, under lock and key; debarred the use of pen, ink, or paper, and excluded from all society; in many instances great personal hardships were added; nevertheless, by degrees they every one without exception, both lay-sisters as

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tom. x. pp. 32, 33 to 42. Besogne, tom. iii. pp. 222, 223. See the short account of the Destruction of Port Royal, in St. Simon's Mémoires, tom. iv. p. 338 to 354; also in Ruines de Port Royal, p. 31 to 62.

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well as the choir-nuns, obtained not only the esteem, but the reverence and admiration of their persecutors.*

The unfeigned piety and enlightened devotion of the Port Royal nuns, struck them with equal veneration and respect; the same degree of piety they had never before witnessed; of the same illumination and information they had not even a conception. The regularity and exact conformity of the captive nuns to the customs of the houses they entered, soon obtained them the highest consideration; whilst their unfailing meekness, humility, patience, and resignation, under a long continued persecution, forcibly struck their hearts and consciences. In most instances, their persecutors, though blinded by prejudice, were not ill-intentioned; accustomed to walk by the letter rather than the spirit—to be guided by external forms and rules rather than by a study of the written Word of

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* Poulain, tom. i. pp. 279, 280. Bes. tom. iii. pp. 227, 228. Clem. tom. x. pp. 287, 288, 289, 290.

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God, and a spiritual application of it to their hearts—it is no wonder that being unacquainted with the true light, which enlightens every man that cometh into the world, they should grope as if they had no eyes, and stumble at noon-day as in the night; and that they should sincerely think they did God service by thus persecuting his servants.*

Consequently, when the light of these suffering children of God shone before them, they did not shut their eyes against it; but, seeing their good works, they learnt from them to glorify their Father which is in heaven, and to acknowledge, that none but the children of God could thus work the works of God. Accordingly, their hearts were changed towards them; and at length, as with one accord, all the houses in which they were scattered, began, not only to confess they were of a truth

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* See Bes. tom. iii. p. 205 to 281. Clem. tom. ix. p. 487 to 542, and tom. x. p. 1 to 287.

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children of God, but to exalt their eminent piety,—their good name went forth into the world. From the depths of their solitary dungeons their light began to spread abroad; the voice of the people was changed; and, in their remote captivity, the persecuted nuns gained a rapidly increasing host of friends, whilst their persecutors, in the plenitude of their power, and in the triumph of complete success, became odious and detestable. Nor was the tide of public opinion long dubious; the peaceful, nay, the triumphant deaths of a very considerable number amongst the nuns, set the seal to a life of good works, terminated amidst unrelenting persecutions. In their blessed deaths the voice of God spoke to their persecutors, and few, even amongst the most virulent, dared call in question the awful sanction of their happy departure.*

* Clem. tom. x. pp. 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 231, 228, 226, 225, 210, 209, 197, 198. Bes. iii. p. 205 to 287.

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Amongst this number, the sisters SOPHIA FLESCELLES,* ST. LUCY OF PEPIN,† and the Prioress, Madame DE COURTIAUX,‡ produced a peculiarly deep impression on the public mind; their native force of character, and their learning, was well known to be only surpassed by their unfeigned piety; nor could it be concealed, however unwillingly acknowledged by their persecutors, that their total disapprobation of the required signature was amongst the last and strongest expressions of their dying beds.§

Madame DE PEPIN, after having been transferred successively to several religious houses, was last of all established in the monastery of the regular Canonesses of Picpus, in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine. After edifying them, for many years, by

* Clem. tom. x. pp. 123, 124, 126 to 130. Bes. iii. pp. 267 to 270, 270 to 271, 232 to 238. Clem. x. p. 206 to 229, also 82 to 85. Necrol. tom. i. p. 121 to 123, tom. ii. p. 345 to 347, 474 to 477, and 445 to 446.

† Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

§ See note, page 71.

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her prudence, piety, and by the eminent resignation with which, in addition to her imprisonment, she bore the agonizing pain of a cancer* for many years, in secret and without complaint. She expired in 1720, leaving a memory held in benediction, even amongst those who did not relent from persecuting her on her death-bed. The ladies of Picpus drew up a most edifying, as well as affecting and interesting account of her life and death; and they still preserve, with pious care, a closely written thick quarto work, the fruit of her captivity. This work she had composed upon the Psalms; it is divided into three columns; the first containing the text—the second her own paraphrase—and the third her reflections upon it. During the whole of her ten years' imprisonment, she always went from the choir to her own cell, to employ herself in the study of Scripture, which was equally

* As only woollen was worn next the skin, by the Port Royal nuns, it is easy to judge what she must have endured.

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her delight and consolation;* indeed, the Christian reader, who endeavours to trace effects to their proper causes, will scarcely fail to connect the superior piety of Port Royal, with its superiority in scriptural knowledge.

Besides the great variety of translations and illustrations of Scripture, which Port Royal was the means of diffusing over Catholic Christendom;† and besides the assiduous and daily study of Scripture indispensably enjoined on all its disciples;‡ a very large proportion of the nuns

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* Clem. x. pp. 84, 85, 86. Bes. iii. pp. 270, 271, 275. Necrol. tom. ii. 445 to 446.

† Racine, Hist. Eccles. tom. xii. pp. 275 to 323, and 535 to 540, also tom. xiii. pp. 781, 782. also see note, p. 80.

‡ Lancelot's Mem. tom. i. pp. 85, 87. St. Cyran's Letters, tom. ii. pp. 366, 373. Bes. vol. iii. pp. 351, 352, 353. Constit. de Port Royal, pp. 408 and 431. Nicole sur le Decalogue, vol. ii. p. 196 to 202. Essais de Morale, tom. i. pp. 75, 76, 131. tom. vii. pp. 12. tom. vi. p. 239. tom. ii. p. 263. also Nicole de la Priere, tom. i. p. 188 to 196. tom. ii. p. 298 to 312. Saci's Lettres, tom. i. p. 75. Fontaine's Mem. tom. ii. pp. 383, 384. also see note, page 80.

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had studied the dead languages, on purpose to read Scripture in the originals. Nearly all of them read fluently the vulgate, and many were perfectly versed in the Greek and Hebrew originals. Nor did they merely content themselves with the perusal of Scripture; they were in the practice of learning considerable portions by heart. Not only the nuns, but most of the secular scholars, we are informed in the constitutions of Port Royal, knew the whole Psalter by heart; and such was the respect in which they held the sacred writings, that whilst they were read daily to the scholars, they listened kneeling, with their hands joined in prayer; in order, says the venerable Abbess who is the author of the constitutions, that they might early be taught to pray for that spirit of God, without which we can never understand the word of God.*

But above all, the eyes of France had been fixed upon Madame LOUISE DE SAINTE

* See note †, page 75.

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ANASTASIE DE MESNIL COURTIAUX, the Reverend Mother Prioress of Port Royal; whom we described as conducting herself with such eminent resignation and constancy at the final dispersion of the nuns. The place of her exile was Blois. For six years she suffered unabated persecution. Debarred from any access to her friends, either personally or by letter, she was closely immured in a solitary cell, except at the hour of attending divine service; nor had she either the indulgence of a fire, or the requisites of winter cloathing. By the Abbess and nuns of the monastery, in which she was placed, she was treated as an obstinate and excommunicated heretic, with whom it was dangerous to associate; and by priests, bishops, and confessors, she was almost daily persecuted, threatened, and tormented, to obtain a signature which it was contrary to her conscience to grant. Her uniform mildness astonished the one, as much as her firmness did the other. But so unconscionable and unrelenting were her persecutors, that they followed her even

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on her death-bed. The bishop proposing perjury to her, as the only price for which she could obtain a participation in the sacraments of the Church.*

"My Lord," replied the dying Prioress, "though I value the privilege of participating in the blessed Eucharist above life itself; and though it would in this tremendous hour, be my greatest consolation; yet I have not the ill-understood devotion, to imagine it allowable to wound the spirit of Christ, to participate in his body."† Truly indeed might this saint-like Prioress be said to be a partaker in the spirit of her venerable predecessor, the Mother Agnés; who on a similar occasion, had exhorted her nuns "rather to forego one of the benedictions of God; than to lose the favor of the God of all benedictions."‡

The last illness of Madame DE COURTIAUX lasted six weeks; during which the clergy

* See note ‡, page 75.

† The signature, which Port Royal considered as such.

‡ Relig. Parf. par la Mere Agnés Arnauld, p. 15.

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on the one side, and the nuns on the other, never failed to beset her dying bed, and to persecute and torment her with every device that could suggest itself; exhausting every argument, threat, and insidious persuasion to induce her to sign the formulary. Two days before the close of her life, the bishop, who was as usual standing before her bed, exhorted her to reflect, for she would soon be in the presence of God. "My Lord," replied the Prioress, "God is continually present with his children; it was in his light only, that I ever sought light; it is then because it is his word, and not merely because I have weighed it during a solitude of six years, that I assure you that my decision is made. It is because it was made in his presence, that it is not now to be re-made." "But," continued the prelate, after an exhortation of above two hours' length, "who will present you to God? it will not be the church, which you refuse to obey; nor yet will it be myself, who am the pastor only to the sheep within her fold. What will you do when you have to appear before God,

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bearing the weight of your sins alone?" The dying nun paused, as if deeply affected; and then fixing on him a mild, but steady eye, replied, "Having made peace through the blood of his cross, my Saviour hath reconciled all things unto himself in the body of his flesh, through death, to present us holy and unblamable and unreprovable in his sight; if we continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel." Then the dying Prioress, rising in her bed, with clasped hands, and fervently uplifted eyes, exclaimed, "In thee, O Lord, have I trusted, nor wilt thou suffer the creature who trusts in thee to be confounded."*

The Bishop however, still went on, calling her the scourge of the diocese, declaring she was sent there as a judgment on

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* Bes. iii. p. 232 to 238. Clem. x. p. 207 to 229. Poulain, ii. p. 303 to 306. Necrol. i. p. 121 to 123. tom. ii. pp. 478, 479. Racine, Hist. Eccles. xi. p. 470. also for this account, see Relat. Edif. des Cap. de P. R.

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their sins, &c. with a variety of other opprobrious expressions.*

When the Prioress, having now not a day to live, found she was really to be denied the last sacraments, and every mark of Christian communion, unless she consented to lend her hand to a perjury, she besought them with many tears; but finding it avail nothing, she wiped her tears away and said, "Well, my Lord, I am content to bear with resignation whatever deprivation my God sees fit; I am convinced that his divine grace can fully supply even the want of sacraments."†

The Bishop of Blois, who seeing her deep distress, had been in hopes of gaining his point, now perceiving nothing was to be obtained, fell into a violent fury, or rather into a perfect frenzy; and in a voice of thunder "declared her body should be thrown out as a carcass, and never should be buried in consecrated ground."‡

"My Lord, as it pleases you," replied

* See note, page 80. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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the nun. The physician who happened to be by, now warmly interposed, and addressing himself with some severity to the Bishop, asked him, "how he could in conscience refuse the sacraments to a dying person on so very frivolous a pretext; and how he could possibly himself either live in peace, or die in hope, whilst he pursued a conduct so deficient in equity, and so opposite to Christian charity and meekness?" The Bishop made no reply, but went away.*

The Prioress knowing that she had now not many hours to live, and no priest being at hand to receive her confession; assembled the whole community, consisting of the Abbess and eighty nuns, all her persecutors and her enemies; and in their presence, made aloud a public confession to God of all her sins. This she did with such unfeigned piety and humility, that the nuns, prejudiced against her as they were, not only were much edified,

* See note, page 80.

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but could not refrain from tears; indeed, when they saw her extremity, and when her serenity proved to them it was not obstinacy, but conscience, that dictated her non-compliance, they repented; and with lamentations they could no longer suppress, bewailed her situation.*

Meanwhile, the Prioress having concluded her confession, turned from every worldly thought. She begged the nuns to recite to her the psalms; and to read to her the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of St. John's Gospel, and the accounts of our Saviour's passion; during which she either joined in the recitation, or was occupied, as appeared by her hands and eyes, in prayer. In this state she continued till twelve o'clock at night, "when," said a nun, "the light of the candles shining on her countenance, an awful majesty of settled peace, tranquillity, and joy, shewed that without sigh, groan, or agony, her spirit

* See note, page 80.

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was departed to her Lord in a deep serenity of faith and love, that made us tremble."

Scarcely was she dead, when the Bishop, who had repented, returned, intending to give her the sacraments. When on entering the room he saw she was no more, and witnessed the heavenly peace on her countenance, he seemed struck to the heart.*

He would not, however, wholly depart from his threat.†

Madame DE MESNIL COURTIAUX was buried in an old abandoned burying ground, overgrown with nettles, and full of rubbish, apart from the other nuns, and without the usual prayers or ceremonies.‡

Her latter end, however, had left a deep impression on the minds of the community; and thirty, out of the eighty nuns of which it consisted, persisted in attending her to the grave; to shew, as they said, some little mark of the high respect they entertained for her eminent piety.§

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* See note, page 80. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid.

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Many years afterwards, the infirmarian of that convent, wrote an account of her to one of her friends, which has been handed down to us. She says, "MADAME DE COURTIAUX, besides her high birth, which appeared in a dignity mingled with courtesy and sweetness in all she did, was also a lady of fine accomplishments, great learning, and of a supereminent piety, which was a continual example and edification to us. She always rose at four in the morning, and spent two hours in private prayer. At six she joined in our public service till eight, when she retired into her own room, and worked for the poor till dinner, which was at eleven o'clock. She fasted all the year round, excepting Sundays and Pascal time; and even then she always abstained. After her repast, the Abbess and Prioress of our convent, who alone had permission to visit her, spent an hour with her. When they were retired, our saint-like prisoner either worked for the poor, or studied, chiefly in the Scriptures; or else wrote, for which she had equal

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talent and unction, till three, when she prayed before the blessed sacrament for an hour and three quarters, and then attended vespers with the community. At six her collation was taken to her in her cell, after which the same nuns as before, paid her another visit. She went to bed at eight, and always rose in the night and spent a considerable time in prayer before the blessed sacrament. She was of a gentle, firm, but sweet and tranquil spirit; much loved; and above all, reverenced and respected. Her words were few, but weighty, solid, and dignified. She seemed most sympathizing and tenderly attached to her friends, but of great tranquillity of mind and heart. She lived in a most edifying and austere manner, following her rule with the same exactness as if she were in her own convent, even to the confession of her faults, which not being received by the priest, she made regularly in the most edifying and devout manner, every Friday, at the foot of a crucifix."*

* See note, page 80.

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Soon after her death, a character drawn up in the form of an epitaph was handed about in all the most distinguished circles in Paris; where it excited so much attention; and occasioned such a lively interest, that it was soon dispersed even to the most remote provinces of France, Flanders, and Holland. The following, though much abridged and by no means a literal translation, is its substance.

"EPITAPH

BY A FRIEND TO THE TRUTH.

"*Adoranda est veritas etiam cruci affixa.*"

AWAITING THE JOYFUL COMING OF HER LORD;
HERE REPOSE IN A FOREIGN SEPULTURE,
THE MORTAL REMAINS
OF THE
REVEREND MOTHER CLAUDIA LOUISA
OF
ST. ANASTASIA DU MESNIL DES COURTIAUX,
THE LAST
PRIORESS OF PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS,"*

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* Necrol, tom. ii. page 475.

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" Faithful in holiness, she discharged her arduous trust as a good and prudent steward, until it pleased her Lord to call her from works to rewards."*

" Respected by the world she had quitted, for her high birth and eminent talents; she was venerated in her retreat and subsequent misfortunes, for her Christian courage, humility, and firmness. She was already near twenty-five years of age, when bereaved by sudden death of her father. The stroke of mercy which took him to behold the glory, made her a partaker of the grace of our Lord. Through that divine grace, she determined thenceforth to live that life of faith which is righteousness, peace, and assurance here, and immortality hereafter. Thus did this blow, like every chastening of the God of love, prove abundant in blessing. Like a sudden gale, it wafted her at once into the port of salvation. She bowed her neck and her heart to the Lord; she took upon herself the light yoke of him, who is meek

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See note, page 87.

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and lowly in heart, as one deeply penetrated with shame and sorrow at having deferred it so long; and she found rest to her soul."*

"At the time when she entered the house of the Lord, the church had rest for a season; and, as a wise virgin, she profited by this season of repose, to lay up that store which might keep her lamp burning with a steady flame throughout the dark night which was at hand, that it might shine in undiminished brightness, even till the bridegroom should appear."†

"The bright constellation of the distinguished inhabitants ‡ of Port Royal shone forth in all their lustre; their brilliant light was hailed with admiration even by the world, whose darkness it manifested. Its pastors, followers of the good Shepherd, abundantly fed them with the bread and water of life. The blessing of God was

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* See note, page 87. † Ibid.

‡ The Arnaulds, Racines, Du Fargis, Briquets, Bregys, Lignys, Des Anges, &c. &c.

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upon them. The great followed their exhortation with veneration and child-like simplicity; the learned sat at their feet to learn true wisdom; and the poor found protection in their wide-extended charities. Port Royal then seemed as the cedar of Lebanon, whose roots strike deep into the soil in impregnable strength; whose head rises to the heavens, whose wood is incorruptible, whose fragrance extends far around, on whose lofty summits the towering eagles, the kings of the feathered tribe, build their aeries, whose boughs afford fruit to the fowls of the air, and whose widespread branches afford a secure shadow from the heat to all the tribes around. Such, at that time, was Port Royal! so that even the host of the aliens, who would have overwhelmed her, when they looked towards this wilderness, and saw her Israel abiding in their tents according to their tribes, the Spirit of God involuntarily came upon them; and though they came to curse, they were compelled to bless."*

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* See note, page 87.

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"Such was Port Royal, at the time that the Mother DES MESNIL COURTIAUX became one of its inhabitants. As a wise steward, she did not in the midst of the days of plenty, forget the years of famine and desolation, which were even close at hand. She hastened to work whilst it is day; knowing that the night soon cometh, in which no man can work. She toiled to lay up for herself that treasure incorruptible, undefiled, and eternal in the heavens; which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where no thief can break through and steal."*

"She knew that the signs of the times change from morn even until eve; and that, with God, what seems far off, is, as it were, already close at hand."†

"Accordingly, the cloud, at first no bigger than a man's hand, soon began to spread; the heavens were over-hung with thick darkness. An awful silence succeeded; fear seized every heart, nor was the pause

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* See note, page 87. † Ibid.

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of dread expectation long. The storm soon burst, which in its progress overwhelmed Port Royal."*

"The excellent spiritual guides of Port Royal were all either lingering in distant exiles on earth, or gone to their rewards in heaven; the venerable mothers who were companions of those who had first established the reform, had successively quitted this life, in which they lived for Christ, to enjoy one in the heavens with him, which is far better; when the jealousy of the adversary of the souls of men, renewed that terrible persecution against her Saints, which terminated in the final dispersion of the nuns, and the demolition of their monastery."†

"It was in these tempestuous times, that the Mother of ST. ANASTASIA was placed at the helm. The twentieth of April, 1706, in the heat of a heavy persecution; the court and the Jesuits being leagued against them, all access being denied to external friends; the Mother ELIZABETH OF ST. ANNE,

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* See note, page 87. † Ibid.

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BOULARD DE NINVILLIERS, the last Abbess of Port Royal, being on her death-bed, at the very last extremity, and about to render her spirit into the hands of God who gave it; and her prioress, JULIA DE ST. BAUDRAU, having also not two hours to live; no guide or counsellor being near, she sent for the mother ANASTASIA, then a simple nun, and with her dying breath nominated her Prioress. She preferred her before others of a more advanced age, on account of her rare merit; and entrusted her with the sole government of the helm in this time of tempests. The sister, ANASTASIA, bursting into tears, threw herself at the feet of the bed of her dying Abbesse, and conjured her to spare her youth and inexperience; but in vain. The shades of death already covered the face of the Abbess, with difficulty she lifted up her cold hands, and already glazed eyes, and placing them on the head of the sister Anastasia, with a faltering and interrupted voice pronounced these words: "His grace is sufficient for thee. Be thou faithful unto death, and

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he shall give thee a crown of life." The Abbess then lay down and expired; and thus the Mother Anastasia accepted the solemn charge.* No royal permission being granted to elect another abbess, the new prioress sustained, for above three years, all the weight of the persecutions and of the business which devolved upon her, with as much prudence as firmness.† She spared herself in nothing; she did all that wisdom, strength, and prudence, chastened by Christian meekness and humility, CAN do. The regularity which had been established in this monastery for above a century, she preserved inviolate, in its pristine purity, holiness, charity, and sanctity."‡

" As far as possible, she rendered abortive the chicanery of her enemies; and if success did not crown her endeavours, it was not because her cause was unrighteous.

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* Necrol, tom. ii. p. 475. Poulain, i. pp. 235, 236. Clem. ix. pp. 93, 94. Bes. iii. p. 135 to 138. Poulain, ii. p. 292 to 306.

† Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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It could not but sink, overwhelmed by the enormous weight and power of combined enemies, who used every means which the prince of the power of this world suggested to them. Nobody ever was superior to her in Christian patience. During the course of a long life of hardship and persecutions, she bore not only all which the most black calumny could invent, both against herself and her sisters; not only did she endure the usurpation of all the revenues of her monastery, and the consequent state of poverty attendant upon it; but likewise the deprivation of the sacraments, without ever having been heard to utter one impatient word. Such is the power of the grace of God! So did it (not any natural means) wholly transform a temper originally lofty and impetuous. A faithful imitator of the superiors who had preceded her, nothing could shake her inviolable stability; their blessed ends, which were continually before the eye of her mind, strengthened her courage in following their holy lives; thus she, walking as seeing him who is invisible, had,

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even in the cell of her prison, a testimony that she pleased God; and after the weary pilgrimage of this life, she had the favor to die in faith, and in a peace which passes all understanding."*

"At length the bolt fell, and on the 29th of October, 1709, the nuns were dispersed in various prisons. The place of her exile was Blois. Immured in a strait prison, amidst the unabated rigors of a hard captivity, she sat still under the shadow of the cross, and tasted all the sweetness of the divine fruit borne by that blessed tree. Dead to men, she was never more alive to God, nor more assiduous in his service.†

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* See note, page 94.

† "Hominibus mortua, soli Deo vivens, cui nunquam majori fide et devotione famulata est, pastorum errori obnoxiorum judicio sacris interdicta, sed a principe pastorum animarum nostrarum Episcopo, *solo immortali et infallibili Pontifice*, cibo invisibili recreata atque intus divino robore confortata; communicans Christi passionibus et de calice ejus bibens, per patientiam ad propositum sibi certamen cucurrit: sæpius impugnata, nusquam expugnata aut in ullo im-

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Interdicted the sacraments, by pastors whom a mercenary cupidity had alone led into error, the good shepherd himself, the prince and bishop of our souls, the *only* immortal and *infallible pontiff*, more than compensated her, by nourishing her with an invisible food, that the world knows not of; supporting her by that divine strength, which is made perfect even in weakness, and giving her to communicate and have fellowship with him in his sufferings. She drank of his cup, and letting patience have its perfect work, she ran with patience the race set before her, pressing forward to obtain the prize of her high calling, even that crown laid up in heaven by the righteous judge for all who love his appearing. Often

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minuta: semper respiciens in authorem et consummatorem fidei JESUM, &c. &c."—*Necrol. Epitaph of Mde. Mesnil Courtiaux, pp.* 476, 477.

The above specimen of the original is inserted, that the reader may be fully convinced how far the spirit is preserved, and the strain of sentiment faithfully represented.

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attacked, but never conquered, she remained stedfast, immovable, ever looking at Jesus the author, until he became the finisher of her faith; until bearing, without the camp, that reproach which the world casts on children of God, she went to meet her heavenly bridegroom, through him to become a blessed partaker of the perfect liberty of the children of God."*

"She survived her monastery of Port Royal des Champs, which was demolished after the dispersion of the nuns, and died at Blois, in the convent of the Ursulines, in which she had been exiled, the 18th of March, 1716, aged sixty-six years and eleven months; after forty-one years adorning her holy religious profession, and after six years, four months, and twenty days of solitude, captivity, and exile."†

"Peace be to her mortal remains
Joyful immortality, through grace, to her
redeemed spirit."

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* See note, page 94.

† This epitaph is taken from that in the Necrol.

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Whilst the exemplary lives of all the nuns of Port Royal, and the blessed deaths of several of their number, caused a deep sensation in the public mind, the conduct of its enemies tended still farther to fix these impressions.

It has already been observed that the Jesuits were much fallen from their pristine piety. The Ignatius's, the Francis Regis's the Rodriguez's, the Grenades, were no more; and a society, the foundation of which was laid in piety and humility, now exhibited the same mixture of good and evil characters as the world at large. An enemy had, in the lapse of centuries, sowed the good field with tares; and though both were suffered to remain, it was but too obvious, that a part alone could be reckoned amongst the good wheat, which shall be

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tom. ii. p. 474 to 477. The general spirit is strictly preserved, and though the abridgment occasioned many alterations of expressions, I flatter myself, that persons reading them successively, without comparing them together, would not be sensible that the translaon was not literal. M. A. S.

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gathered up and put into the garner. The same society to which Europe was first indebted for the best seminaries and colleges it then afforded, was now occupied in paralyzing the moral sense of the civilized world, by disseminating the baleful poison of casuistic divinity;* and the very same body, which emulating the zeal and piety of apostles, had, through indescribable difficulties and dangers, formed the reductions of Paraguay,† shewing forth one of the most lovely specimens of Christian society amongst the savages of South America, was beheld in Europe, occupied in endeavouring to overthrow to the very foundations, the enlightened Christianity of their Port Royal brethren:—they were permitted in wrath to succeed. But scarcely was this triumph complete, when, like the thunder of divine

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* See Lettres Provinciales. Racine, Hist. Eccles. tom. x. xi. xii. xiii. including the 17th century. St. Simon, iv. p. 334 to 337.

† Muratori's Paraguay. Charlevoix's Paraguay. Mémoires du Marquis de Pombal.

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indignation, a stroke burst upon them from a distant quarter, which shook their credit to the very foundation. Scarcely had they unjustly destroyed the children of God, to obtain an unrivalled influence, when the whole of that influence was blasted by a foreign hand; and the immense accumulation of wealth and power, the fruit of such arduous toil, such mental labors, and in some instances, of such duplicity and crimes, was suddenly dissipated into air, and dissolved like the baseless fabric of a vision.

An accusation, presented by the powerful, and supported by a mass of evidence, was brought forward, accusing this venerated body of having openly encouraged the most infamous practices of idolatry in China,* to preserve their own credit and power.

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* Poulain, i. pp. 291, 292. Beausset's Vie de Fenelon, ii. pp. 349, 352. Clem. x. pp. 41, 42. Racine, Hist. Eccles. tom. xii. under the articles Penitence, Morale, p. 1 to 105. Condemnation de la Morale des Casuistes, Morale des Jesuites, p. 105 to 275. See concerning the Chinese and other Jesuit missions, from p. 197 to 271.

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Great, indeed, was the accumulation of evidence brought forward on this occasion; considerable was also the ingenuity displayed in endeavouring to ward off the stroke, or at least to blunt its edge; but, whatever were the palliations, explanations, or extenuations offered by the few who still remained their friends, it is certain that this blow they never recovered. They sunk, for ever, in the estimation of the public at large, and perhaps, they sunk proportionally to the very exorbitant degree of credit they before enjoyed.

Then the remembrance of Port Royal, its bright talents, and its exemplary piety, were revived. The constancy with which its followers had uniformly borne the loss of estimation, wealth, liberty, and life, rather than in one single point equivocate, was remembered. It was contrasted with the conduct of its persecutors, who were accused of betraying their God for gold. France remembered, with a bitter pang, that she had sacrificed the children of God, levelled their sanctuary, and cast

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out their ashes as a vile thing, under the delusions of those, who, though bearing the appearance of angels of light, turned out to be fomenters of actual idolatry, and worshippers with heathens of strange Gods.

If this remorse was felt by France in general, it was doubly so by those who had been the immediate agents of the enmity of the Jesuits in this destruction.

The Cardinal de Noailles suffered, perhaps, more bitterly than any one; weak in his resolves, but far from being ill disposed; kind, good, susceptible of pious impressions, and endowed with a tender conscience; but easily deceived, alarmed, or over-persuaded, he never willingly had consented to the destruction of Port Royal. Now, however, that he clearly saw the wickedness of those to whom he had lent himself, he became fully convinced of the innocence of those whom his weakness and irresolution was made the means of oppressing. He began more loudly, and more distinctly to hear the voice of conscience; the good report of the persons he

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had destroyed, reached him on all sides, agonizing his soul; a deep perturbation and disquietude seized upon him, and his heart might truly be said to be rent with remorse and sorrow.*

In this state he sent again for his faithful secretary Thomassin, and exposed to him the terrible state of mind in which he found himself. He told him that he most bitterly repented not having followed his advice; that Port Royal was never absent from his mind, that its recollection rose up continually before him, and followed him everywhere. That he felt a perpetual restlessness, and seemed on his pillow, in the visions of the night, alternately to see it flourishing, peopled with saints and men of letters, blessing and blessed; and then suddenly to behold the scene reversed, and to view the desolate condition to which his irresolution had reduced it. He seemed to hear the bleak winds of winter whistling through its desolate passages, the nettles

* Poulain, i. pp. 305, 306, 307, and 308.

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overgrowing its courts, and the fox peeping out at the windows, or wolves disputing the mangled remains of its pious inhabitants, whilst the very stones of its foundations seemed torn up and hurled upon his guilty head by some invisible hand.*

M. Thomassin, sensibly feeling the Cardinal's extreme anguish, endeavoured to speak to him as a Christian should do. Without mitigating or palliating his culpable weakness, he sought to sooth him by those consolations which may be justly appropriated even by the most gravely culpable, when they become sincerely penitent. But the Cardinal was not to be so appeased. He declared he could not be satisfied without going to the very spot, beholding the full extent of his sins, and in the very scene whence the record of his offence rose to heaven, humbly confessing it before God, and imploring, if not too late, for mercy! In short, he said, that as the only tribute of respect he could now

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* See note, page 104.

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pay to Port Royal, and as an unfeigned mark of deep humiliation and repentance, he must visit the ruins, and water them with his tears; and, that he desired his true and faithful friend, M. Thomassin, would accompany him.*

The day was fixed. At the appointed hour the Cardinal called in his carriage, and they both went together. During the whole ride, the Cardinal appeared deeply affected, and maintained a profound silence. On arriving at the brow of the hill upon which Les Granges are situated, and from which the top of the spire of Port Royal is first visible, he could no longer suppress his emotion, but covering his face with both hands, burst into a torrent of tears, which however seemed so far from relieving him, that he appeared half suffocated and convulsed with sobs. "In short," said M. Thomassin, "his groans were not so much like the sorrowings of a man, as the suppressed groanings of some animal in torture, so

* See note, page 104.

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that I began to be absolutely terrified at the state of extreme misery and agitation in which he was. I tried to calm him, but in vain. Absorbed in the distressing images which remorse presented to his conscience, he heeded me not. I then urged him by every possible persuasive to return, fearing lest a nearer view of the demolitions should really be succeeded by some fatal revolution either in his bodily frame or his mind; but in vain. He broke from me, and quitting his carriage, drew near bare-headed and with clasped hands, and though his legs trembled under him, so that I could scarcely support him, and that he was often constrained to stop from the violence of his emotion, he would nevertheless proceed, exclaiming, "No, no, I will go on, Yes, to the very end. I will not be spared any part. I will see my enormous sin in all its horror. Here, in the midst of this miserable devastation, Here will I unburthen my mind, here it may be, (O, here may it indeed be!) that the God of all compassion will yet have mercy on me, a miserable

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sinner!' Then, beating his breast, and wringing his hands, like one frantic with grief, he prostrated himself on the earth, amidst the wide-spread desolation, and cried aloud for mercy." At length he came to the burying-ground. The yawning graves still appeared gaping on every side, and along the dismantled wall, though covered with waving nettles and wild flowers, the inscription yet remained over the portal before entering, "Time is yet before thee," and, being entered, "Time is for ever behind thee."* Here he seemed seized with an absolute agony or frenzy of raving despair. "O, said he, beating his breast, all these dismantled stones will rise against me at the day of Judgment. O, how shall I ever bear the vast, the heavy load!" When the Cardinal had quite satisfied his devotion, or rather, when he was so compleatly exhausted as to be quite incapable of any resistance, M. Thomassin put him again into his carriage, and brought him

* See Descrip. des Batiments de P. R.

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back, which he did not however accomplish without considerable difficulty, for his grief was so extreme, that it resembled the alternate ravings of the wildest frenzy, succeeded by the gloom of the blackest despair.*

From this period, the Cardinal sincerely endeavoured to repair the injuries he had done Port Royal, by uniform kindness towards those nuns who still survived the stroke of their dispersion, and the protracted and cruel hardships experienced in their various captivities; but, with the very best intentions, he could do but little, owing to the implacable virulence and deep-rooted prejudices fomented in the King's mind by Madame de Maintenon. Accordingly, the nuns of Port Royal remained in the violent state of persecution we have briefly described, till the death of Louis the Fourteenth, which took place in September, 1715; and whilst they in the depths of their dungeons, felt their peace deepen,

* Poulain, i. pp. 305, 306, 307, 308.

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and their hopes brighten more and more, as they approached a perfect and eternal day; their unhappy persecutor, from the meridian of worldly splendor, had seen the sun of his prosperity gradually decline, till the long evening of his days, desolate, solitary, and cheerless, set in; and as the lengthening shadows stretched across his path, the dark shades of the tomb began to close around him, uncheered by the bright evening star of Christian hope. In the last hours of his life, abandoned by Madame de Maintenon,* whom he had raised from obscurity, to whom he had sacrificed even the decencies of his state, and whose tool he had been in his persecutions; he sent for those to whom he had had the misfortune to give his spiritual confidence, the Cardinals de Rohan and de Bussy, and the Pere le Tellier, a Jesuit; and when they stood around his dying bed, he addressed to them in anguish of spirit these me-

* Ruines de Port Royal, pp. 43 and 44. St. Simon, vi. p. 177. Ibid. p. 159.

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morable words. "If, indeed, you have misled and deceived me, you are deeply guilty; for indeed I acted in good faith—indeed I sought the peace of the Church."* Thus died Louis the Fourteenth! and so did the "Lord avenge his slaughtered saints," whether of the church of Calvin or of Rome; and so *little* was the close of him whose dazzling qualities had amongst men obtained him the title of *Great!*

Ascending the throne in an early minority harassed by the distractions of civil war, Louis was educated in the school of adversity, without reaping its best benefit. He derived there the lessons of human prudence, but had the misfortune not to learn those of heavenly wisdom. Hence subsequent prosperity, sent as a blessing, proved a snare. Fitted by the native grandeur of his mind, as well as by his situation, to become a central point of re-union to the talents of his nation; the fine arts flourished

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* Clem. x. pp. 172. Ruines de Port Royal, pp. 42, 43. St. Simon, vi. p. 159.

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under the protection of his throne, and poets selected him as the subject of their song. His praises sounded from the fortressed rocks and broad waters of the Rhine, to where they were re-echoed by the snow-capped Pyrenees; and the prostrate nations whom his victorious arms had subdued, were compelled to bow their reluctant necks to his yoke.

But, when he knew God, he glorified not God, neither was thankful to him who gave him so much richly to enjoy; hence, because he did not like to retain God in his knowledge, he became given over to a reprobate mind; and untouched by the signal prosperity of his public career, he sunk into the unhappy number of those who worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

The Lord looked down from heaven, and saw that he was become vain in his own imagination, and that his foolish heart was darkened. God lifted up his voice and spake, spake by his providences; but, because, long suffering and kind, and

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of tender mercy, he is slow to anger, remembering that we are but dust; and because that he shews mercy to the thousandth generation of those that love him and keep his commandments, God looked down on the descendant of St. Louis in pity and tender compassion, and laying a gentle hand upon him, first began to counsel him by the awful examples of the partners of his errors.

One, noble, gentle, lovely, and in disposition most virtuous, quitted in early youth those temptations by which she had been deceived; the world, its vanities, its honors, its delusive pleasures and its lawful comforts; exchanging a debasing exaltation, the wages of sin, for the narrow cell and bare, cold cloister of a Carmelite; by the deep and sad repentance of a long life of tears, she spoke to every heart but his who should most have heard, that it is indeed an evil and a bitter thing, even in one instance to forsake the Lord.*

* St. Simon's Mémoires, i. p. 7. iii. pp. 283, 284. Dict. Hist. article La Vallière.

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So spake the warning voice, the voice at once of God, of virtuous repentance and of a true friendship; but in vain did it call to him, who, as the deaf adder, listened not to the voice of the charmer, charmed it never so wisely.

Then, another and a more awful example came. One, hardened in guilt, and sinning with high hand, endowed with birth, with beauty, and with wit at will; a bright name, domestic ties, and a good conscience, all vilely cast away. Outwardly, gay and sprightly, Madame de Montespan was inwardly threatened and tormented with heart-rending anxieties, apprehensions and remorse, the terrors of the Lord on those who are compelled to hear his upbraiding voice in judgment, because they will not listen to his call in mercy. Consumed by bloody macerations, wasted by painful vigils, yet sinning still,* she weighs the scanty bread of bitterness, with the vain hope, "by not sinning on all sides"†

* Mem. St. Simon, vi. p. 307 to 323.

† Ibid. iii. p. 285.

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to make a composition with that God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, who requires truth in the inward parts, and who will not assuredly be mocked. Tormented, amidst the magnificence and pomp of courts, with those spectres by which the spirit of God, through the medium even of imagination, startles the guilty conscience; appalled amidst the revelry of banquets, by that ominous handwriting which made Belshazzar tremble; weighed in the balance, but found wanting; the very court whom her caprices ruled, beheld her shrink as a culprit in the summer storm, and pressing a little infant to her heart in a frantic manner, plead its innocence, to shield from the thunderbolt her guilty breast. Unable to bear her own reflections, or the darkness of night, she disturbed its peaceful solitude with the aching blaze of torches, or busy murmurings of discordant tongues, lest her weary eyes, once closed, should open next upon the judgment morn. In bondage all her life, through fear of death, yet not turning

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from that sin of which it is the wages: thus lived the capricious idol of the court of France; an awful memento, reasoning yet more loudly than the apostle, of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come; nay, even now at hand. She bore about with her, whilst in the body, the gnawings of that worm that dieth not, and the torment of that fire which is not quenched; till abandoned by all, quitted with cold indifference by those to whom she had sacrificed the favor and peace of God, she died contemned in desolate old age. Her own son, with horrible and fearful impiety, ransacking the dying bed of her, who though she had abandoned him, was yet his mother, in order to discover the keys of a guilt-bought treasure; and her very remains cast out with abhorrence by the same house her wealth had instituted, and her influence established,* Madame DE MONTESPAN expired, an awful

* Dict. Hist. tom. x. p. 519, article 3, Rochouart.

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proof, that it is indeed a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

So spake the God of love to Louis; but he who listened not to the still small voice, neither heeded the consuming fire. Again the Lord's voice was heard, but now it spake in tempest and in whirlwind.

Struck with agonizing pangs and sudden death, he beheld before his very eyes, one called from the midst of a brief career of sin, to stand before the judgment-seat, and give account of the deeds done in the body.†

The king was startled, perturbations seized his mind and conscience. But his fear, and not his heart was struck. He turned from his wallowing in the mire; but his change was of the letter, not of the spirit; he changed not from carelessness to genuine and vital religion, but from open

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* Mem. de St. Simon, i. p. 122 to 129, and 109 to 113.

† St. Simon, iv. pp. 32, 33, 34, and notes. Dict. Hist. article Fontanges.

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vice to exterior formality; he quitted not all creatures for the Creator, but the corruption of the open for the garnish of the whited sepulchre. He adopted the form of religion, but remained ignorant of its substance. He assumed the ceremonial, which is the outward garb of the children of light; but he forgot, that to be indeed a son of God, he must be born again by that new birth of the spirit, without which no man can enter the kingdom of heaven. Thus, whilst he turned from many of the works of unrighteousness, his heart was not changed; all things were not become new; he was not a new creature.

Yet the Lord had patience still. Once again his voice spoke in his providences, and raising up in his own house a great example of insufficient religion, he bade him consider the end of these things, and understand it perfectly.

One arose before his eyes, far different from the rest, abounding in many of the choicest gifts of God to human nature. Solid in understanding, unblamable in

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conduct, wise, prudent, and accomplished: thus much and yet more was the celebrated MADAME DE MAINTENON. Risen from the very depths of poverty and obscurity, by progressive steps, to seat herself next the throne, (and risen by dint of real merit,) she was strictly decorous in conduct; untainted even by suspicion, she was punctiliously exact, not only in the ceremonial of religious observances, but in many essential points of good conduct, which religion enjoins: she heard gladly, and like Herod, did many things. She was of those who fast twice a week, and give tithes of all they possess, and who touching the righteousness of the law, are blameless: she wanted nothing of godliness but the power, nothing of religion but the spirit, nothing of Christianity but the truth and life. For, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Like the MERE ANGELIQUE, MADAME DE MAINTENON possessed supereminently, the talents requisite for prudent government; but though the trees were so

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far externally alike, yet their fruits partook of the total difference of their roots. The MERE ANGELIQUE, following the good shepherd, and led by his voice, established a society, which, whilst it flourished, diffused vital religion over Catholic Christendom; and whose numerous writings have, since its destruction, proved a solace and edification, equally to the Catholic and to the Protestant churches. MADAME DE MAINTENON, a decorous follower of the world, attentive to the voice of well-understood ambition, always and uniformly paid homage, not only to the ceremonial of religion, but to many of the respectable social duties. But the sheep alone it is who know the good shepherd's voice, and distinguish it from that of the stranger. Hence, through ignorance, she used her influence to quench the flame of vital religion wherever it sprung up, both in the Catholic and Protestant churches. Both LA MERE ANGELIQUE and MADAME DE MAINTENON established monasteries. Both institutions were in the

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very same district, and each have reflected well-earned celebrity on the noble foundresses. But the requisite recommendation to the one, was piety; that to the other, elevated rank. From the establishment of MERE ANGELIQUE, want of vocation was the only exclusion; from that of MADAME DE MAINTENON, not only want of rank, but the want of interest, nay, even any personal deformity or accidental blemish, was decisively exclusive.* In the monastery formed by MERE ANGELIQUE, the Holy Scriptures were daily studied, kneeling or prostrate, and were applied to the conversion of the heart, to form heirs of heaven; in the monastery (if monastery St. Cyr may be called) founded by MADAME DE MAINTENON, the Scriptures were also used, but used as the subject of theatrical representation; and the historic examples of holy writ were employed, not for edification, but as means of acquiring a graceful carriage

* See the comparison between Port Royal and St. Cyr, in the Ruines de Port Royal, pp. 9, 10.

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and good enunciation, in order to amuse the king, and form her disciples for inhabitants of a profligate and dissipated court.*

MERE ANGELIQUE, descended from a family, noble, affluent, and of high intellectual endowments, counted all these advantages as dross, so that she might but win Christ. After beginning, by being the blessed means of the established conversion of her whole excellent family, she went on from faith to faith, and from grace to grace, a bright example, of whom the world and the age were not worthy. Opposition thwarted her at every step; persecutions, on all hands, thickened around her, and hedged her in on every side; till at length seeing the object of her whole life and endeavours on the point of being overthrown, immured and imprisoned in that house

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* For this character of Madame de Maintenon, see the anecdotes related in the Mémoires de St. Simon, i. p. 113 to 125, 136 to 151. iv. p. 54 to 58, 75 to 81, 81 to 91, 91 to 95, 288, 289. also le Beaumelle's Vie de Maintenon, and Lettres de Maintenon.

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which was bestowed by the munificence of her family as a royal abbey; surrounded by calumniators and enemies; threatened with violence by the civil power; a martyr to a most lingering and excruciating disease, but possessing her soul in perfect peace, LA MERE ANGELIQUE expired, full of joy, serenity, assurance, and triumphant faith.*

MADAME DE MAINTENON on the other hand, sprung from a family obscure, and comparatively little known; acted prudently, to win an honourable worldly reputation. She began by supplanting her benefactress, whose patient perseverance and reiterated endeavours, had alone succeeded in bringing her forward. She proceeded from honor to honor, above suspicion, and untainted by the breath of malice or calumny; till surrounded by partisans, flatterers, and dependants, governing by her capricious smiles, the prostrate princes of the blood, who, freezing, in winter

* See note, page 122.

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snows, accompanied, bare-headed, her equipage, on foot. She obtained a degree of worldly prosperity, far beyond all which the wildest imagination can offer to dazzle the hopes of any subject. She became the ruler of the very throne itself, which unblushingly stooped to her sway; till having obtained, she found the bright bubble, which reflected such dazzling colours, delusive, hollow, and empty. Dull, heartless, drear, and cheerless, without object, stimulus, or hope; an old age of apathetic despondency proved the sole meed of a life of insufficient religion, of habits of social usefulness, but grounded on no firmer basis than an enlightened self-love, and of a heart which stopped short of truly loving God.*

So spake the voice of God by providences, in which judgment was tempered with mercy. But it spoke in vain. Louis understood it not. His heart was waxed gross, and his ears were dull of hearing, lest he should understand and become converted.

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* See note, page 122.

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Changed only from the Publican, who committed many notorious vices like other men, to the professing Pharisee; whilst he duly paid tythe of mint and cummin, and anniseed, he neglected faith, judgment, and the weightier matters of the law. Hence because he sought not the truth with his whole heart, he was entangled in a net of his own weaving, and given over to believe a strong delusion. Because he enquired of the Lord, without putting away the idols from his heart; therefore was he answered according to the multitude of his idols. Hence whilst he sedulously followed the forms of the church, he so little understood its spirit, that under the influence of MADAME DE MAINTENON,* he had the misfortune to become one of the most virulent persecutors of vital religion.

He signed the revocation of the edict of Nantes, the imprisonment of Madame Guyon, the exile of the venerable Archbishop

* Ruines de Port Royal, p. 46.

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of Cambray, and the destruction of Port Royal.

Thus was the king so unfortunate, as to shake to its very foundation all true and vital religion in France; both in the Catholic, and Protestant churches. Little did he imagine, that at no very remote period; its genuine spirit once extinct, the Shekinah departed; no longer defended by the bright talents and pens of the Tillemonts, Pascals, Nicoles, Sacis, and Arnaulds, the outward temple itself, would sink beneath the poisoned darts of the aliens; and that in the hideous scene of ruin, his own descendants, would, amongst the very first, be buried in its fall. Little did he foresee, that the very palace of Versailles, in which he signed the death-warrant of all spiritual religion, would, stripped and dismantled, be amongst the first to fall in the wide and long, and desolating storm. So Sampson of old, deluded by the flattering blandishments of an ambitious woman, and deceived into the hands of his enemies, was blinded: when, putting forth his gigantic strength, to

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shake the two pillars of the temple; he sunk overwhelmed and crushed in the accumulated ruin, which he had himself drawn down upon his own head.

Such were the disastrous consequences of a reign, distinguished not more by the brilliant constellation of talents, which gave it lustre; than by the immorality and profusion of the prince; and by the protracted, ruinous, and needless foreign wars; which beginning by loading the nation with insufferable burthens,* terminated in the total subversion of that royal authority, by whose insatiable luxury and ambition they had been originally imposed. A reign, remarkable for men of eminent distinction, alike in literature and in piety.

LOUIS might have been truly said, in the early part of his reign, like St. Paul in the beginning of his journey, to have been surrounded by a great light from heaven; and in his progress, we have observed that

* Ruines de Port Royal, p. 23.

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the Saviour of men, by the instrumentality of awful providences, continually addressed to his heart the awful inquiry, "Why persecutest thou me?" and shewed him, in the experience of the partners of his errors, that "it is hard for those that kick against the pricks." But here the analogy ends. Unlike the great apostle of the Gentiles, LOUIS was not obedient to the heavenly vision; he did not turn to that inward spiritual guide, who might have instructed him more perfectly in the things which had been said, and which should tell him what he must do; that guide who could alone have delivered him from his blindness: hence the scales still remained upon his eyes, and the veil over his heart.

Then the meridian sun of that glory, to which he had alike sacrificed himself and his people, began to decline. One dark providence quickly succeeded to another. He had forced down the holy hands which were wont to be uplifted, and the enemies began to prevail against him. His fortresses

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were surrendered, his campaigns were disastrous, his fields were the prey of the spoiler.

Did any other guilt of darker dye, heavily ascend before the throne of God, and plead with the accusing voice of blood for blood? Immured in the deep dungeons of an inaccessible fortress, unpitied by any human eye, unheard by any human ear, was it an elder brother's groan, that rose from the grated towers of the Bastille? or did a brother's blood, from the untimely tomb of Marchiali, loudly call upon that God which seeth in secret, to reward the deed with a dread retribution openly? No human eye has indeed penetrated the concealment of that mask; the revolution of a century and of empires, have left unraised that iron vizor;* but dark conjectures rest upon the deed; and if charity turns from contemplating the dubious tale, it is lest she should unwillingly read an hideous

* Dict. Hist. see many curious and minute details under the article Masque de Fer.

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crime, in the awfulness of the tremendous judgment.

The king's own family was struck; and reiterated blows in rapid succession, sent his daughter-in-law, and three successive heirs to the crown, to an early tomb.* A sudden consternation and awe spread over the defenceless land; and the gloomy cloud was rendered yet darker, by the impenetrable mystery that lowered over their common grave. Thus stood LOUIS, defenceless, stricken, and alone; in vain opposing the hoary honors of his defenceless head, to the driving storm. As the sun whose meridian splendor is past, shorn of his brightness, pursues his solitary and declining course, through the pathless void of the heavens, till he finally sets in fallen majesty amidst the chill and cheerless fogs of a dark wintry eve; so LOUIS, bereft alike of glory and the solace of domestic comfort,

* See the interesting account of the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy in St. Simon, tom. i. p. 247 to 310.

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pursued desolate, cheerless, and alone, the remainder of the dreary waste which led him to the tomb.

The murmur of popular applause was changed for the portentous silence of discontent; the cheering voice of domestic kindness was hushed in the silent grave; the chillness of frozen age crept upon him, and benumbed his aching heart; and the dark and lengthening shadows of the grave, deepening, stretched across his desolate path; whilst the low, faint murmurs of a troubled people, began to indicate a gathering storm.

Yet in the dread stillness, a voice arose; the voice of that divine love which overcometh evil with good, and which is stronger than death.

From their distant exiles, and from the depths of their remote dungeons; the prayers of the Arnaulds,* the Sacis, the Fene-

* Poul. tom. i. pp. 127, 128. Racine, Hist. Ab. pp. 173, 174.

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lons,* the Guyons, and the Valois,† arose continually in remembrance before God, and pleaded the cause of their persecutor. The fervent and effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much. LOUIS the Fourteenth slept with his fathers, and the last departing beam of the long day of grace lingered yet.

A time was yet afforded for repentance; the catastrophe was suspended; the end was not yet. Till a profligate Regent, and his licentious successor, having filled up the measure of profusion and immorality; behold the awful judgment comes at last.

The brooding tempest at length burst; and a long and tremendous hurricane swept the guilty land. The earthquake from beneath uprooted its foundations; the bolt from above, struck the throne; and the besom of destruction passed over the land. God, who visits upon the third and fourth

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* See the letter written by Fenelon on his death-bed to P. le Tellier, in Beausset's life, p. 458 to 461. tom. iii.

† See Lettres de Madame Gertrude de Valois.

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generations, the sins of the fathers who have been disobedient; singled out, and struck in the midst of the startled nations, that throne by which he had been set at nought.

But in the tremendous justice, God remembered mercy: The voice of his thunder indeed was heard, it spoke to startled Europe, to distant centuries, and to unborn generations of men, the dread retribution which attends the neglected duties of the altar and the throne. The bolt indeed fell; but not till his grace had prepared the heart of him who was struck; nor till his love softened and tempered the blow. LOUIS SEIZE was numbered amongst the sons of God. Therefore was he permitted to be, though in a very inferior sense, a follower of the great exemplar who supereminently "suffered not for his own sins." He followed his Divine Master; who was meek and lowly in heart; who was reviled, reviling not again; and who when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. Louis des-

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pised not the chastening of the Lord, neither did he faint under it; but, in the horrors of a long and contumelious captivity, he drew rich fruits of righteousness from the sore chastisement; till patience having had her perfect work, the light affliction, which was but for a season, was followed with a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and the final stroke, which spoke so awful a lesson to every nation of the world, called from surrounding and conflicting sorrows on earth, "LOUIS, *the son of* ST. LOUIS, *to eternal mansions in the heavens!*"

To return however to the thread of our narrative. Soon after the death of Louis the fourteenth, all the prisoners detained merely on account of religion, were liberated, both from the Bastille, and every other state prison in France.*

None more deserved the same justice, than the nuns of Port Royal; dispersed, exiles, and captives, for the same cause.

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* Clem. x. p. 172 to 174.

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At this favorable juncture, their friends conceived the idea, that some relief might perhaps be extended to them: and they determined to interest themselves in their favor.* A way had already been prepared for their exertions, by the active zeal and steady fidelity of MADEMOISELLE DE JONCOUX or JONCOUR,† a lady equally noted for piety, learning, and active talents for business. The daughter of a gentleman and lady of Auvergne, who were alike distinguished for honor, piety, and an original mode of thinking; Mademoiselle de Joncoux received an education, uncommon both with respect to religion and literature. Being naturally endowed with great quickness and solidity of understanding, she was soon regarded as a prodigy. She acquired a critical knowledge of Latin; which she at first learnt, with a view to understand more perfectly the church service,

* Clem. x. p. 172 to 174.

† The whole article of Mademoiselle de Joncoux, is taken from Clem. x. p. 50 to 56, and notes, ix. p. 215. Bes. Tom. iii. p. 230.

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and the writings of St. Austin. It is to her elegant and learned pen, that the world is indebted for the celebrated translation of Nicole's voluminous notes to the Lettres Provinciales, published originally in Latin, under the assumed name of WENDROCK.

From her early youth, MADEMOISELLE DE JONCOUX entertained a close connexion, and a filial reverence and attachment for the house of Port Royal. As she grew up, she became devoted equally to piety and to literature. She was engaged, when the last persecution of Port Royal commenced, in the arduous labor of translating the disquisitions of PAUL IRÆNEUS. In this work she was ardently interested; but no sooner was the persecution begun, than she instantly relinquished it; and henceforth wholly devoted her talents, her purse, and her activity, to the service of her oppressed friends. When their revenues were seized, her fortune was, with a bountiful hand, applied to their relief; when they were vexed with unjust, but endless litigations, her clear mind unravelled all the mazes of misapplied

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law. It pursued iniquity and injustice in all its windings and latent concealments; and without ever quitting the upright path of integrity herself, she dragged forth the lurking fiend to public view and public abhorrence. She detected the latent fallacies of the cause of their unjust oppressors, and repelled their blows with equal steadiness of friendship, as with legal skill. In vain did the noblesse, the court, and the Jesuits, unite to crush the efforts of this valiant Judith. Though unassisted and alone, far from shrinking from this unpopular, and most arduous office, or from trembling at the frowns of the great, she not only stood her ground, armed with the panoply of a good conscience, but followed them in their secret retirements, unfolded to their eyes their own iniquity, and exhorted them with force upon their conduct. Nay, she often spent two or three hours at a time with the Cardinal de Noailles, pleading the cause of the nuns. After their final dispersion, though her hopes were crushed, her kindness, piety, and courage, were still

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equally industrious and persevering. She tried by every means in her power to mitigate the rigors of their captivity.*

When the pensions of the exiled nuns were not paid, and when they suffered, in consequence, from a continual deprivation of the first necessaries of life, MADEMOISELLE DE JONCOUR, continually sent them pieces of serge, broad cloth, linens, and every comfort she could procure. At length, by dint of reiterated endeavours, and much address, she found means, in some instances, to open a correspondence with some of the exiled nuns, which enabled her to discover, and diligently to publish to the whole world, the iniquitous artifices which were used to induce them to forego their conscience. When a pretended list of their signatures † was published by the

* See note †, page 185.

† Soon after the dispersion of the nuns, a list of the signatures of several was published. On investigation it appeared, that in some instances of paralytic imbecility, the hands of the nuns had been guided by their

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Jesuits, she engaged M. de Fouillou to publish a work against them. It was her industry which collected, and her zeal which furnished, all the documents compleatly to refute and detect the imposture; and it was greatly owing to the exertions of this lady, in giving notoriety to the truth, that the public mind was so totally changed, as it respected Port Royal.*

Such was the state of affairs, when, at the death of LOUIS, and immediately on the beginning of the regency, all the friends of Port Royal united with this Lady in petitioning for the redress of those grievances under which the Port Royalist Nuns laboured. As their monastery was rased, and their revenues dissipated by their persecutors, their friends conceived the idea of

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persecutors; in all the other instances but one, retractations were formally made by the nuns, who positively denied ever having lent their names to the papers published. One nun alone, Madame de Vavaseur, made no retractation.

* See note †, page 135.

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endeavouring to unite the captives in one and the same convent, and letting them enjoy the short remainder of their days in each other's society. Various objections were at first raised against this benevolent scheme; but at length, by dint of unwearied perseverance, and of that charity which overcometh all things, MADEMOISELLE DE JONCOUX, and the friends of Port Royal, succeeded.*

Scarcely had success crowned this good work, when MADEMOISELLE DE JONCOUX,† having reaped the temporal fruit, was called to the eternal reward of her labors.‡

It was then determined, that the remaining captive nuns should be united together

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* See note, page 135. ‡ Ibid.

† The life of this lady, Clemencet observes, is a desideratum in Christian and literary biography. There are many points of view in which it would be singularly interesting. Her connexion and contests with many of the leading characters of the day, would furnish a variety of curious anecdote; and her piety, learning, and talents, render her a bright example to her sex, and an

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in the same convent; but many years had now elapsed since the destruction of Port Royal; most of its persecuted inhabitants had for ever left their troubles far behind. Five of them only were united in the Abbaie of the Benedictines of Malnoue, one

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honorable and rare instance of the best human gifts, exerted in a divine cause. We insert her Epitaph:

Sub hoc marmore quiescit
Virgo nobilis Francisca Margarita de Joncoux,
Virginum in sæculo degentium decus
Præstanti sagacique ingenio prædita,
Tempore quo abundabat iniquitas
Non refriguit sed effervuit ejus caritas
Pro justitia et veritate agonisantibus
Fugitivis captivis aut exulibus,
Mira dexteritate adfuit
Summa benignitate consuluit,
Sanctimonialium in extremis positarum,
Amica fidelis, mater provida, ultrix impavida,
His atque aliis operibus intenta,
Supremum diem obiit.
V. Kal. oct. an MDCCXV. ætat. 47.

Clemencet, vol. x. pp. 50, 51, 52, 53, and Bes. vol. iii. p. 230.

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of the most respected communities in France, for its regularity, and for the spirit of poverty, retirement, union, and charity, which reigned there. These nuns were, MESDAMES LE JUGE; COUTURIER, BERTRANDE, BASILISE, and D'AFFLON.*

The sisters of Malnoue, received the nuns of Port Royal in a spirit according with the exhortation of St. Paul; and those whom they entertained as strangers, with hospitality, proved to them as angels indeed, received unawares.†

The nuns were welcomed, and treated in a manner which was well calculated to make them forget the bitterness of their long captivity, and to mitigate those deep sorrows which could not be removed; the loss of their friends, and the destruction of their house. They formed, in the midst of the Abbey of Malnoue, a little Port Royal, of which Madame de Couturier was the head;

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* Clem. x. p. 192 to 199, and p. 288 to 291. Bes. iii. pp. 275, 276. † Ibid.

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and light, and fervor, and an abundance of spiritual blessings were soon diffused by their Christian example, over the house which had at first received them so kindly; so that in this instance, as in that of Cornelius, the charities of the sisters of Malnoue rising before God, had been the means, by giving them opportunities, of increasing their faith, of covering a multitude of sins.*

Many years after, a nun of the Convent of Malnoue thus wrote of them: "I have only had the honor and happiness of being acquainted with these eminently holy and blessed persons, since they came amongst us. Although their residence with us, has been extended to many years, yet we can give you no account of any of the sufferings and vexations they endured elsewhere, because their humility and Christian charity, never allow them to mention, or even to allude to them. We endeavour that they should have nothing to suffer with us, but the recollection of the past. Their abode

* See note, page 142.

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with us, has been a blessing to the whole house, and they are a continual means of instruction and edification to every one of us. They lead a uniform, retired life. They are continually occupied in prayer, or in studying Scripture, excepting when they are engaged in working for the community, or the poor, or in performing acts of charity. Exact in conforming to all our regulations, they are always punctual, both to time and to the most minute of our observances, at service, public prayer, refectory, &c. They are, above all, distinguished by a great air of candor, simplicity, deep humility, and a dignity of truth, which both impresses us with respect in their manners, and which is written on all their countenances. Their self-abasement is equally deep and sincere; it is not indeed continually in their speech, as is the custom with many religious professors, but all their actions and manners bear witness, that they of a truth, believe themselves most weak and fallible. They may be called truly great, as religious characters, never

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seeking applause or distinction, by undertaking any extraordinary or remarkable actions of penance or mortification, but doing apparently common things, with a most remarkable and uncommon fidelity and spirituality.

"All human life is really made up of a succession of little occupations and duties, which, without tedious minuteness, could not be related; but, in reality, it is a constant fidelity, in the aggregate of these little things, that forms the true greatness, and grandeur, and solidity, of the Christian character. Their venerable superior, Madame de Couturier, was paralytic on one side, and could not therefore walk without extreme difficulty. She always, however, contrived to drag herself to all the observances of the community. She often spoke of the great and venerable Mother Angelica, and was indeed her worthy follower in all things. It is difficult to describe a piety so eminent, that it influences the beholder progressively by its sublime constancy, rather than dazzles by any sudden impres-

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sion, I can then only, in one word, say of them every one, that we do not any of us recollect a moment, since they have been with us, in which they did not seem present with God by recollection, and with their sisters, by a genuine spirit of Christian love. This is all I can tell you of them. All was interior, supremely loving and reverencing God from choice, always speaking of him fervently, and in him loving each other and us with an equable divine love."*

Each one of them made a blessed and edifying end.†

‡ But by far the most eminent, amongst all those nuns of Port Royal, who lived to be recalled, was the sister MAGDALENA OF ST. GERTRUDE OF VALOIS.§

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* See note, page 142. † Ibid.

‡ The whole hist. of Madame du Valois is compiled from that in Clem. tom. x. p. 232 to 287, and Bes. tom. iii. from p. 238 to 248, and Relat. Edif. des der. cap. all.

We shall, however, give a few references to the most remarkable passages.

§ Clem. x. p. 232 to 235.

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This lady, whose name announces the dignity of her birth, was distinguished for supereminent abilities, high accomplishments, and for manners equally polished and dignified. Early introduced into the first circles of Paris, she had scarcely tasted the pleasures of the world, when she experienced their vanity; and just as her parents were on the point of concluding a match for her, the splendor of which might be suitable to her birth, she suddenly formed a resolution, finally to quit the world, and to devote herself entirely to the service of God.*

Her family were in habits of intimacy with M. Arnauld. Her acquaintance with him, and a frequent perusal of the two admirable works of the Mere Agnes, "*The Perfect Religious*," and "*The Constitutions of Port Royal*," determined her choice, and inspired her with a peculiar predilection for this monastery.†

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*, See note §, page 146. † Ibid.

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She accordingly presented herself as a postulant, and intreated with ardour, permission to consecrate herself to God in that house.*

The Reverend MOTHER ANGELICA, OF ST. JOHN, was, at that time, mistress of the novices. This excellent spiritual mother, well aware, by experience, of the heavy persecutions the house had sustained, and would probably have again to experience; and knowing Mademoiselle de Valois's resolution to have been sudden, thought it right to lay before her a full view of the two-fold difficulty she would have to contend with, that of assuming the rigors and discipline of a strict monastic order, after habits of luxury and dissipation; and that of continuing steadfast and immovable in the heat of persecution, amidst subtleties and artifices, which were enough to deceive the very elect, and to subvert the old established in the faith. †

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* See note ϕ, page 146. † Ibid.

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But all MADEMOISELLE DE VALOIS was told of these difficulties, only augmented her zeal, and strengthened her resolution to enter the monastery. She entered into her noviciate with ardour and firmness, grounded on a depth of humility, and a degree of holy confidence in God, which gave earnest of the solidity of her vocation. In fact, all mountains were removed by the fervency of her faith, and became vallies; and all rough places became plain before her. Silence, watching, fasting, obedience, and humiliations, became her delight. Soon after her entrance into the monastery, she was seized with a violent and dangerous fit of illness, so that her life was despaired of. This attack was attributed to her having unadvisedly, and contrary to the usual practices, assumed at once, all the austerities of the religious life. The violence of this transition was farther aggravated by her having entered at Lent. She sunk to the very brink of the grave. In these heart-searching circumstances, her peace and tranquillity manifested the sincerity of her

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conversion: she prepared for death in the full assurance of faith.*

The danger, however, was transient; though, after it was removed, both her friends and the community united in the persuasion, that she never would be able to endure the austerity of the rule. The abbesse of Port Royal informed her friends, that however eminent were the qualities of MADEMOISELLE DE VALOIS, and however deep was her conviction of her merits, it became impossible, under the circumstances which had just occurred, to receive her. Nor could the community reconcile it to their conscience ever to admit her, unless a consultation were called, and that they returned to her parents a favourable answer. No sooner was the young postulant apprized of the abbesse's determination, than the deepest grief manifested itself in her countenance. She listened, however, in respectful silence; and then going into the choir, prostrated herself at the foot of the

* See note ϕ, page 146.

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altar, and, bathed in tears, earnestly prayed to God to take her future destiny under the direction of his peculiar providence, and so to over-rule the voices of those who should consult, that their decision might be for that state of life in which she could be most faithful to divine grace. She then concluded by a solemn appeal to the Father of Spirits, and Searcher of Hearts, beseeching, that if, in his fore-knowledge, he saw that she would prove unfaithful amidst the temptations of the world, that he would be pleased, in mercy, rather to remove her by death, than permit her to return to it.*

MADEMOISELLE DE VALOIS'S friends having taken proper advice, her health in the mean time became so completely re-established, that it was decided she might safely enter the monastery, and that by a more cautious beginning, she would, without doubt, be soon enabled to bear all the austerity of the rule. She was soon after admitted; and in the year 1677, began her

* Clem. x. p. 234 to 239.

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noviciate with equal devotion and fervour. She passed through all its trials with fidelity and zeal truly edifying, and was on the point of consummating her sacrifice, by taking the black veil and final vow, when the mother Angelica of St. John, who was then abbesse, foreseeing that another storm was about to burst on Port Royal, determined to lay before her a full view of all the difficulties to which she would expose herself.*

She represented to her, with force, all the dangers, difficulties, perils, and persecutions, to which Port Royal was then exposed; recounted to her their past exiles, separations, and captivities of many of the nuns; and observed, that she would probably find herself grievously deceived if she looked for her strength in the example and fellowship of a large and holy religious community, instead of fixing her single eye on Christ alone. In the persecutions which were past, they had been separated

* See note, page 151.

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from each other; many had past three or four years in a solitary captivity. The remainder of the community had seen the exterior of their monastery invested with soldiers, and the interior occupied by strange nuns, placed there as gaolers, who watched them in such a manner, as to preclude all Christian fellowship or comfortable communication, so effectually, as if they were really separated. "In short," she said, "the persecution of 1664 has taught us by experience, the necessity of what the Scripture continually inculcates, the examining our foundations, the being rooted and grounded in Christ himself, and not in the mere habituation to our rule. Every nun amongst us must be prepared singly, and without assistance from others, to meet persecutions, to sustain combats, dangers, and difficulties, in solitude and exile. She also added, that her novices being fully informed, by the experience of the past, of what they had, or probably might have, to encounter in future, it would be an inexcusable presumption in them to lay the

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foundation, unless they had fully counted the enormous cost of finishing the building. She told her, that a very uncommon degree of faith could alone justify a person in voluntarily exposing herself to difficulties, dangers, and temptations, so far beyond the common austerities of any monastic order; she therefore insisted upon her taking some days purposely to consider of what had been pointed out; and concluded by exhorting her, in the most solemn manner, to sound her heart thoroughly before God, to beseech him to search it out, as with candles; and by no means hastily, and without a full conviction that it was really required of her, to entangle herself in a maze of snares, out of which the wisdom which is from above, could alone extricate her; or to expose herself to a weight of persecutions, which those who had experienced could fully assure her, that only a very uncommon degree of the grace of God, and a very uncommon degree of fidelity in corresponding to it, could possibly enable her to sustain. In short, again," said the

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abbesse, "I most solemnly exhort you to count the full cost before you venture to lay the first stone; and in the holy presence of God, who searches the secret motives of every heart, I now, in his name, declare to you, that you are inexcusable, if you voluntarily assume a calling in which all your difficulties and temptations will be increased an hundred fold, unless you believe that God really requires it of you, and that his Spirit has pointed out this, and this only, as the path in which you, individually, are called to enter, and work out your salvation." The abbesse having thus exhorted her young novice, MADEMOISELLE DE VALOIS answered, without hesitation, "that she was fully aware of all the abbess had represented; that she had weighed it well, and was convinced it was her duty to enter that holy community." She added, "that she should consider it equally a happiness and a glory to partake in such sufferings for Christ's sake; that she was assured that his grace was sufficient for her; that divine strength would be perfected in her weak-

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ness, and that she should think herself most happy, were she counted worthy to shed the last drop of her blood for Christ's sake."*

In these dispositions did Mademoiselle de Valois take the veil, in the twenty-second year of her age, and the Lord did not fail to shed abundant benedictions upon the soul, on whom he had bestowed such a preparation of heart.†

The proofs of the solidity of her vocation were manifest from the very beginning of her engagement. All the Christian graces seemed united to the bright gifts by which she was distinguished. She set no bounds to her penance but those formed by obedience. And, if the rigor of her austerities appeared excessive to her companions, whose short-sighted view only comprehended the present time; the uncommon persecutions and bodily sufferings, by which her faith was afterwards tried, leave no doubt upon the Christian mind, that she

* See note, page 151. † Ibid.

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was led in this uncommon path by that spirit of God which foresaw the nature of her future trials, and thus prepared her for uncommon sufferings, as by a holy apprenticeship, disciplining alike her body and her mind. During severe winters, she not only deprived herself of the comfort of ever approaching the fire, but she was often observed, during the night, exposing herself to the rigors and inclemencies of the open air. She habituated herself continually to sleep on the floor of her cell, and often curtailed her rest to five hours.*

Though naturally of a feeble and delicate constitution, she embraced with joy occupations not only the most humiliating, but the most arduous and laborious. That humility, that love of being abased and counted as nothing, without which all penance and austerities are only vices in a specious disguise, was deeply rooted and grounded in her heart. It seemed, if possible, the supereminent characteristic,

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* See note, page 151.

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beaming amongst the constellation of virtues and talents which adorned her soul and her mind. The habitual and deep sentiment of her manifold infidelities, seemed always present with her; but she was not content with annihilating herself merely before God, (though not only her piety was eminent, but that Madame de Valois was likewise distinguished for learning and great literary talents,) she always embraced every sort and occasion of public humiliation, which she imagined might tend to degrade her in the eyes of her sisters. With this view, several years after her profession, she earnestly besought her Abbesse, the Mother Angelica of St. John, to permit her to make a public confession in full chapiter, and in presence of the whole assembled community. Such examples, indeed, were by no means rare at Port Royal.*

But if the virtues of Madame de Valois shine thus brightly amongst the great lights of Port Royal, they beamed forth with re-

* See note, page 151.

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doubled effulgence, when amongst the children of darkness, with whom her lot was afterwards cast, her light shone forth alone: it appeared as though God had showered down upon her his graces in a yet more abundant manner, after she was finally torn away from Port Royal.*

Her trials were however great, in proportion to the strength of her faith. She had arrived on the 20th of November, 1709, at the convent of the Filles Dieu, at Chartres, which was the place of her destination. This monastery was so violently prejudiced against Port Royal, that it would not open its doors to receive her; and Madame de Valois was compelled to remain in her carriage in the street till four o'clock in the morning, before the bishop's mandate could be procured, which they were then, though very unwillingly, compelled to obey. In this monastery, she might truly be said to be placed in the midst of enemies. She was immediately conducted to a cold damp cell,

* See note, page 151.

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when she was immured under lock and key. The whole house considered her as an obstinate heretic of the very worst description, not one member of the community would associate with her, or even speak to her, without the most urgent necessity. Her health, it has been observed, was always delicate; and, at this juncture, the hardships she endured had rendered it peculiarly infirm. In this state, unwell and in sorrow, she was placed in a house of enemies, without consolation or friend, and even without receiving the good offices of common humanity. Torn from her mothers and sisters, and from the beloved house which she considered as the port of salvation, she was now captive in a strange house, where she was rigidly guarded, wholly deprived of books and of work, condemned to a horrible and unvaried solitude, except, indeed, when it was interrupted by the visits of priests, prelates, and Jesuits, who exhausted all, which menaces, flatteries, or subtleties could furnish, to induce her to betray her conscience, and to sign the formulary.

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Their visits were usually succeeded by one from the Abbesse, who sincerely thought she was doing God service by using every means in her power to assist their influence.*

Not even the languors of disease protected Madame de Valois from their reiterated persecutions; and many times, when she was so ill as to be believed to be nearly dying, they were not only always at hand to weary and assail her by constant unkindness and vexatious chicaneries, but they did not scruple to endeavour to stagger her faith by giving her false accounts of her sisters, and making her imagine they had quitted the truth. At these times she wept bitterly, and at first believing their fraud, replied, "Whatever others are so unfortunate as to do, the word of God cannot be broken; on that word I cast myself; he declared, thou shalt not bear false witness, and his word remains the same, though every one of the children of men should alter; let God be true, though every man is a liar."†

* Clem. x. p. 238 to 240. † Ibid.

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In this house, Madame de Valois had to encounter hardships of every description which can afflict human nature; and it would be, perhaps, difficult to determine, whether her mental, or her corporal sufferings, were most severe. She was, indeed, in want of every thing temporal and spiritual: some of these sufferings may be conceived, by one instance, which the nuns themselves afterwards told. It has been already observed, that the winter of 1709 was the most intense which had taken place for above two centuries. During its whole course, Madame de Valois was allowed no fire; this privation was rendered more cruel, by the packet containing her change of raiment, and her winter clothing, having been put by mistake into another carriage, which took it elsewhere, and it was not returned for above eight months. A charitable lady, who boarded at the convent, had the kindness to send Madame de Valois some wool to make under-garments; but she was obliged to go without any, till she had, with her own hands, spun, woven,

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and made them. With respect to spiritual concerns, her state was still worse; she was neither allowed to join the other nuns at divine service, nor was she furnished by them with books of devotion, before the arrival of her packet. No priest would receive her confession, nor administer to her the sacraments, though they continually urged her to sign the formulary, that she might participate in them. Her sentiments on this head, may be gathered from the large collection of her papers which yet remain; and in writing which, as it will afterwards appear, she found means to beguile many hours of her solitary captivity; in one of them she speaks in the following strain:*

† "The privation of thy holy Eucharist,

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* See note, page 161.

† This is not a literal translation, though it would pass for such if read successively, without being compared with the original. References are given accordingly.

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O Lord, sensibly affects me:* yet will I endeavour continually to look to thee, the God of all consolation, for comfort under so severe a trial and deprivation. Thou, Lord, who searchest the heart, thou seest the utter impossibility in which I am placed, of partaking in this divine banquet, a participation which alone would be a full consolation, and which would make every other suffering light;† yet even this trial of seeming separation from thee, I look upon as coming from thy hands, and as a part of the order of thy providence; I cannot distrust thy grace, as being all sufficient to sustain me under it.‡ Yet, O Lord, look down upon me;§ look down upon me in mercy, and comfort me under the weight of my redoubled affliction. If I cannot have fellowship with my sisters, in partaking in thy most sacred body, and most precious blood, enable me, O Lord, to have fellowship and communion with thee, in thy sufferings:‖

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* Clem. x. p. 240. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. p. 241. § Ibid.

‖ "Je communierai aux souffrances de Jesus Christ.

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thy sufferings which are *the whole of our merits*, and which form our *sole plea of mercy* before the throne of God.* By them alone it is that we are redeemed from death, and become living members of Jesus Christ; and by faith in them, by an intimate union with this divine head, it is, that we become one body with him; through him alone it is, that God is willing to accept our bodies as a living sacrifice.†

"In all ages of the church, some of thy children have been prevented by thy providence, from assisting in this sacrifice. Such is now my state;‡ but thy great mercy, O Lord, has now given me to see even with the understanding of my mind, what I have long had the blessed experience of in my heart; that we are by no means less participants of the benefits of a sacrifice in spirit, though we may not partake of it as to the

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que font *tous* nos mérites. C'est par *elles* que nous sommes les membres vivans de Jesus Christ, et c'est par l'union à ce divin chef que l'on est un même corps, &c. &c.

* Clem. x. p. 241. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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flesh.* There is but *one sacrifice* for sin; even the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, which sacrifice was regarded by the eye of faith, by all the saints of old times. Now in the ancient law, those who offered to thee a burnt-offering, did not eat of the flesh of the victim, which was consumed by fire;† nevertheless, the sacrifice was acceptable in thy sight;‡ and thou didst accept those who offered it through the sacrifice thou hadst instituted; and pouring thy spirit upon them, thou didst testify that acceptance, by thy peace shed abroad in their hearts, and by the fruits of sanctification exhibited in their lives.§ Thus may its great antitype, the one true eternal sacrifice for sin, become acceptable and available for me; whilst I communicate, not by an outward handling of the body and blood, but by an inward spiritual communion, through faith, in the spirit and sufferings of my Lord and Saviour.‖ As in

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* Clem. x. p. 241. † Ibid.
‡ Clem. x. p. 242. § Ibid. ‖ Ibid.

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the day of crucifixion, those who were the very agents of making the great sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, did yet not partake in its benefits;* not having faith in their hearts; so may the plenitude of thy grace, O Lord, enable me, by faith, to offer the true sacrifices for sin acceptably, though I cannot partake of it bodily.† I not only then hope, but I trust, with full assurance, to obtain the pardon of all my sins, by offering by faith JESUS CHRIST, the alone true victim for the expiation of *all* sin; and by such a communion, I not only hope to obtain pardon, but I trust my inward man will be renewed day by day, that I shall find grace to help in time of need; and that as my day, so shall my strength be. In short, I trust to participate in all the graces of those who do exteriorally communicate; not but that I ever esteem those most happy indeed, who do enjoy this privilege; yet I thus occupy myself, to moderate my excessive grief; and in the de-

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* Clem. x. p. 242. † Ibid.

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solation of my misery, I seek to communicate in the vivifying spirit of my Lord, that spirit who is emphatically termed the comforter, who was the consoler of the disciples, when the bodily presence of Christ was taken from them; that comforter our Saviour promised to send to the disciples, when he departed, and promised he should abide with them for ever, which he declared to be no delusion, but the spirit of TRUTH, proceeding from the Father, and testifying of him. Teach me, O Lord, to profit by the example of the holy women of old. Magdalene sought the body of Christ in the tomb, and wept when she found it not,* forgetting, that although men might take away his body, yet, that by his divine power, and his divine spirit, he was always present to every one who loves him in sincerity. Doubly should we remember it, since he has been graciously pleased to declare, 'I am always with you,' (that is, with the disciples who love him) 'to the

* Clem. x. 243.

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end-of the world.' I love thee, O Lord: be thou then, O Lord, with me, and let me still be a partakêr of thy mercy. If I receive thee not outwardly, whilst on earth, in the Eucharist,* I shall in bliss behold thy glory in heaven. Ransomed by thy blood, I shall then behold, face to face, him whom now I see only as through a glass darkly, but whom, though not fully seeing, I love; nay, I shall not only see, but joining the redeemed throng, I shall, to all eternity,† praise him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; who was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.‡ My tears indeed, for a season, are my meat, day and night, whilst they continually say to me, 'where is thy God?' Deep indeed calls unto deep; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me, and I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy. Yet the Lord

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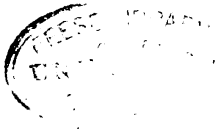
* Clem. x. p. 244. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.



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will command his loving kindness in the day time; I shall yet praise him for the light of his countenance, and in the mean time, this recollection, this assurance, sustains me. I console myself by the remembrance of the centurion;* he was unworthy indeed, that our Lord's bodily presence should enter into his house; yet receiving him by faith into his heart, his prayer was granted, and he obtained a perfect and compleat cure."

Such were the sentiments of this admirable nun, but the firmness with which she conducted herself towards men, was not more remarkable than her humility before God. The latter, indeed, may be considered as the ground of the former.†

On being continually tormented by the Jesuits to sign the formulary, as the price of her receiving the sacraments, "Reverend fathers," she replied, "falsehood and per-

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* Clem. x. p. 244. † Clem. x. p. 246.

The references given, will sufficiently shew the exactness with which the strain of sentiment is preserved.

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jury can never be the preparation to receive the God of truth."

* Some of them exhorting her to alter her sentiments, and telling her that her conscience should be reformed, she answered, "All conscience is founded upon the Word of God, who is without variation or shadow of turning, and whose word is immutable, and cannot be broken. When the conscience is once formed, it therefore cannot be RE-formed."

Another time, on their exhorting her to consult the opinion, of many learned men of their body, she said, "Conscience must be solidly grounded, formed upon the rock of the Word of God, and not be continually re-formed on the shifting sands of the versatile notions of men: a religious conscience cannot be established on versatile opinions; for we are no more to be children, tossed to and fro, and carried by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men." "Again, Reverend Fathers, the will of God is the

* Bes. iii. p. 239. Clem. x. pp. 271, 272.

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foundation of all conscience, now God is truth, and truth must be immutable. So likewise will the faith and conscience of men be, if it is really founded upon it. God alone is the rock of ages. His word alone is the foundation on which to build our religious edifice; and as every foundation must in its own nature be ruinous, which is erected on the perishable basis of human opinion, so that must ever continue unshaken, which is founded on the word of God."

Notwithstanding these explicit, and repeated declarations of Madame de Valois, the persecution was still continued against her.

The Bishop of Chartres,* the Clergy, the Jesuits, as well as the nuns, assaulted her on every side. Under these circumstances she felt heavily oppressed. She generally listened in silence, and when their burthensome visits were terminated, went, and at the foot of the altar, poured out her heart

* Clem. x. p. 248. Ber. iii. pp. 238, 239.

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in supplication before God; often beseeching him earnestly, and with many tears, rather to let her die,* than have the misfortune of abandoning the truth. Thus she went on, running with admirable patience the race set before her, renewing her faith continually by looking at him, who is alone the author and finisher of it. She waited continually on God, and therefore her strength was renewed, therefore did her soul now mount up as with eagle's wings, above the sorrows of time, and gaze as with eagle eye upon the sun of righteousness; and amidst want, hardships, and illness, and injuries, menaces, the most opprobrious language, and the most harsh treatment, did the God whom she served, strengthen her to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint.

Sometimes she was threatened with being immured in a dungeon. "As it pleases your Lordship," replied she to the Bishop of Chartres, "I trust the God of truth

* Clem. x. p. 248. Bes. iii. pp. 238, 239.

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will protect and deliver me amidst all. If you immure me in a dungeon, truth will descend there with me; and he who is the God of truth, will both console me, and make me truly free amidst captivity; and if you put me to death, then the same truth will indeed deliver me for ever, and crown me."*

Respect for the sanctuary, prevents the relation of the injurious and opprobrious language the prelate heaped upon her in reply; he seemed to forget the character, not only of his sacred profession, but even of a gentleman, and a man, in the foul and contumelious virulence with which in his frenzy, he loaded his unfortunate female captive. Suffice it then to say, that he threatened her with the most horrible torments, if she did not consent to violate her conscience.†

One day the prelate took away all her prints and books of devotion.

"My lord," replied the captive nun

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* Clem. x. p. 249. † Ibid.

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" your Lordship cannot take away from me the spirit of prayer, and that suffices me."*

During all the early part of her captivity, she was continually harassed by the visits of this prelate, which he mostly extended to above the length of two hours. After a time, Madame du Valois finding that these reiterated visits were spent in repeating the same things over and over again; at length adopted the expedient of sitting down to her spinning the while, and making no reply.†

The Bishop sometimes threatened that he would send her to some remote place, and exile her from his diocese;‡ to which she answered with a good humoured smile, " that his Lordship could not do her a greater pleasure."§

He then told her, that he should de-

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* Clem. x. p. 249. Bes. iii. p. 243.

† Bes. iii. p. 239. Clem. x. pp. 249, 250.

‡ Clem. x. p. 250. Relat. Edif. des Cap.

§ Ibid.

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prive her soul of the benefits of the sacraments at the hour of death, and that her body should be thrown out on the dunghill. At this last threat she smiled, and said, "Well, I do not think your Lordship will be able to discover any place to cast my body, where our Saviour will not be able to find it, and raise it up at the last day; and, if in the mean time, my soul be happy in heaven, it is of very little importance where my body is cast." "But, my Lord," continued she, more gravely, "if at the awful hour of death, I should be unjustly deprived of those assistances, which the church grants to all her children, by means of Priests, who should be the servants of God; then God himself, will by his grace, immediately and abundantly supply their instrumentality. His divine power is no more to be circumscribed by the will, than his love by the want of charity of man. I know indeed that it is most painful to approach the awful hour of death, without an outward participation in the sacraments; but it is better dying, to enter

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into heaven (though without sacraments) for the cause of the truth; than, receiving the sacraments, to be cited to irrevocable judgment, for committing perjury."*

When the Bishop announced to her that some of her sisters had signed, she wept bitterly in silence, but remained unmoved; and one day being much pressed and tormented to make some reply, she rose, and with clasped hands and uplifted eyes, kneeling down, exclaimed, "O Lord, maintain me, I beseech thee, by thy all-sufficient grace; and rather permit me to die than be unfaithful to thy truth."†

Such was the uniform conduct of Madame de Valois. Many years afterwards, when she was interrogated how she had proved faithful in a series of difficulties, almost beyond the endurance of human nature, she replied, "Thanks be to the grace of God alone! yet amongst means, two appear to me to have been attended with a peculiar blessing. One is, to ground our

* Clem. x. p. 250. † Ibid.

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apprehension of duty in every instance on the word of God; where this is done, our sense of duty will not vary with our frames and feelings, but will uniformly bear the sanction of divine authority.* The second is, when an action or a duty is so grounded, never to reason with the enemy; but to consider, that if God has declared his will, that declaration supersedes all motives, however plausible, by which every one of his creatures might urge the contrary.† Our first parents fell by reasoning with the enemy, and the man of God of Bethel lost his life, because he listened to the voice, even of a prophet, in contradiction to that of God, which had already spoken to him individually."

The Bishop of Chartres finding his endeavours unattended with the least success, gradually desisted from his visits. He however sent his ecclesiastics in his place, who often came, and endeavoured to argue the

* Clem. x. p. 250.

† Clem. x. pp. 271, 272, 273.

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point with Madame du Valois, three hours at a time.*

In process of time, these persons produced an effect exactly the reverse of what was intended. The nuns belonging to the convent where Madame du Valois was placed, though unenlightened and prejudiced, were by no means illintentioned. The gentleness and uniform kindness of Madame du Valois' manner, had won upon their hearts: her stability and firmness had begun to make a very deep impression upon them; and the respect and attention they paid her became daily more and more marked.

The Abbesse was the first† who endeavoured to console her; and to diversify her captivity, by daily permitting both the principal nuns, and the boarders in the convent, to go and sit with her. When her eminent piety, her highly cultivated

* Clem. x. p. 251, and Bes. iii. p. 239.

† See for the rest of her detention in this convent, Bes. iii. p. 242 to 244, and Relat. der. Cap. and Clem. x. p. 240 to 287.

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mind, and her amiable manners gained her the affection of the whole house, they all thought they never could do enough to shew their repentance, for having at first treated her in a manner so harsh and unfeeling. Two ladies especially, who boarded in the convent, became most tenderly attached to her, and, by means of their kindness, she was enabled to correspond with all her friends in Paris. So strong was their attachment, and so truly disinterested their friendship, that during the time she was persecuted by the bishop's myrmidons, they had remained a whole year in the convent, without once visiting the country in summer, or Paris in winter, on purpose that they might always be on the spot to assist and console her, and to enable her to correspond with her friends.*

At length, the prelate seeing that Madame du Valois had been tormented year after year in vain, and that all his persecutions were so far from gaining her, that he seemed more likely to lose the whole house, he now

* Bes. iii. p. 240. Rel. der. Cap.

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determined to reduce her to a close captivity; and, accordingly, forbid that she should have any intercourse with any person in the house, except the servant, necessarily appointed to wait upon her, and ordered that she should never quit her cell, except at the time of divine service.*

This rigid command the Abbess received, and was compelled to execute. She did it with the greatest grief, as she was become most tenderly attached to her prisoner.†

Madame du Valois heard the order in silence, and, when the key was again turned in the door of her little cell, she prostrated herself before God, and anew dedicated herself to him.

In the afternoon the door opened, and, to her great surprize, the Abbesse again appeared. She expressed her astonishment, adding, that she thought only the servant was to have access to her. "For that reason, my dear sister," said the Abbess, handing her the coffee, "I have henceforth the pleasure to be that servant;" and, ac-

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* Bes. iii. pp. 241, 242, 243. Rel. des. Cap. † Ibid.

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cordingly, henceforth, every morning and evening, she came and brought her both her meals, with unwearied assiduity; and then, sitting down and taking her own with her, endeavoured by every kind attention and soothing discourse, to mitigate her desolate captivity.

The Abbess, however, could not prolong her visits for any great length of time, consistently with the duties of her office; and one day, being much engaged, so that her stay was shorter than usual, the kind-hearted Abbess, on quitting Madame de Valois, brought a cage with two beautiful little Canary birds, she had tamed on purpose to amuse Madame du Valois's captivity, and set it down on her table, with tears in her eyes. Madame du Valois, who never willingly uttered any of the hardships she had endured, often afterwards mentioned these two acts of kindness as having touched her heart beyond any thing she had ever experienced; and she who had been unmoved by years of persecution, could never mention these two little incidents without tears.

But Madame du Valois had yet other

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trials to encounter; her difficulties appeared great in proportion to the strength of her faith, and she now began to find that it required a yet more abundant degree of grace to withstand the distress and tears, and reiterated solicitations of her friends, than to continue unshaken amidst the hardships and persecutions inflicted by her enemies.*

† The kind Abbess, the two ladies, her friends, and indeed the whole convent, whilst they reverenced her piety, did not enter into the motives of her scruples. They were perhaps amongst the number of those sincerely good, but mistaken persons, who measure duty rather from the consequences an action involves, than from the principle from which it flows.†

They must indeed have been aware, that a signature of the formulary, containing a decision on a work which they had never read, was an assertion, (and that upon oath) of a fact, concerning which they were ig-

* Besogne, tom. iii. p. 243. in Relations des Religieuses exilés. Relat. der. Cap. des Rel. de P. R.

† Ibid.

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norant, and that too involving an attack on the character of a Bishop of the Church. But, as that bishop was out of the reach of being injured by it, they probably considered it as not worth while to bear persecution for the truth, unless it were a truth which might essentially serve others.

Madame du Valois thought differently. God has expressly declared, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour; and she received his command in all its plenitude, without ever allowing herself to seek any of those palliations, by which some persons might have sought to excuse a departure from it.

The Abbess, and the two ladies who entertained so particular a friendship for Madame du Valois, and who could now seldom have access to her, began to be exceedingly uneasy lest she should die under the rigor of her captivity. The Abbess, who was the unwilling instrument of inflicting it, and her friends, who could no longer mitigate her solitude, were equally miserable. They earnestly and importu-

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nately besought her by letter, as the other had done by word of mouth, to give up that, which, though true, was not a truth involving important consequences, and to sign the formulary. The Abbess especially, used prayers, tears, and supplications, "O, my dear sister," would she say, "if you will not pity yourself, pity me. Will you that I should have the misery of occasioning the death of my friend? if you should even by accident die in this captivity, I never can survive my grief." By such motives did she affectionately urge her prisoner, nor were the two ladies less importunate; one of them, indeed, suffered so exceedingly, on account of her anxiety for Madame du Valois, that she was reduced to the brink of the grave by a nervous fever: in this state, when her life was despaired of, she was seized with the most earnest desire once more to see Madame du Valois, who had been the blessed instrument of their conversion. This permission was refused, unless Madame du Valois consented to sign. She was then entreated by the Abbess in

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the most pathetic manner, not to refuse a peaceful death-bed to her best friend, for the sake of a fact of no importance. Madame du Valois herself, was most tenderly attached to this lady; her soul was agonized by the urgent representations of the Abbess, and such horrible doubt and amazement came upon her, that, in the anguish of her distress, she knew not what to do. After a pause, she urgently begged the Abbess to quit the room, and prostrated herself before God in prayer, in the agony of her soul. This, indeed, she afterwards often said, was the hour of darkness. In this state she remained a long time, nor could the anguish of her mind find any utterance, but in the words used by our Lord. She earnestly prayed that this bitter cup, if possible, might pass from her, but that the will of God might be done, and that he might permit her to die in the conflict, before she renounced his truth. After several hours, Madame du Valois opened her door, and admitted the Abbess. With a countenance of perfect composure, but

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which evidently shewed the extremity of suffering and conflict she had undergone; and in a voice tranquil and calm, but almost extinct from the agony she had passed through, she declared her determination to adhere to her conscience. "Men," she said, "could not interrupt the true communion of saints, which was in the spirit, not in the bodily presence only; she was therefore going to prostrate herself before God, in prayer, for her dear friend, nor did she wish to have her retirement broken in upon at present." Accordingly, her prayer was never interrupted but once, to take a small portion of food, till next day she learnt that the crisis was past, and the lady out of danger, though still very ill.

Thus did this admirable nun remain unshaken, either by the menaces of her enemies, or the solicitations of her friends.*

The Bishop of Chartres seeing he could prevail nothing, resolved to rid himself of so troublesome a charge, by devolving it

* Besogne, tom. iii. p. 238 to 244.

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upon somebody else. After some deliberation, he determined to transfer Mademoiselle du Valois to a convent at Mantes, the superior of which was violently prejudiced against Port Royal, and had been successfully employed in persuading several nuns to sign the formulary. M. de Chartres was not without considerable hopes that Madame du Valois might also be persuaded by the same influence. She was accordingly sent from Chartres, under an armed escort, a woman accompanying her in the same carriage, partly to watch her movements, and partly to wait on her.*

On her journey from Chartres to Mantes, Madame du Valois was grievously distressed in mind. A depression and horrible fear fell over her spirits, when she recollected how many, even amongst Christians of the first ages of the Church, had fallen during the severity of persecution; when she remembered the character which had been

* Besogne, tom. iii. p. 238 to 244. Clemencet, tom. x. p. 255. Relat. des Cap. Edif. des Rel. de P. R.

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given to her, of the Abbess of the monastery whither she was going, she feared that she never should prove faithful to the end, and she looked forward with anxiety to every accident which might happen on the road, and which might be a means of terminating her sufferings and life together, before she should have forfeited her conscience.

Early in the afternoon, Madame du Valois reached the town where she was to lodge that night. She was scarcely arrived, when a splendid carriage drove up to the door of the same inn, accompanied by a long train of servants, splendidly mounted and accoutred. A young lady, full dressed, stepped out, and asked to be immediately conducted to the Port Royal nun, who was just arrived. The young lady appeared to be under twenty, her dress, which was most magnificent, sparkled with diamonds and precious stones, her countenance was radiant with beauty, and her manners, though gentle, were awfully severe, so that the persons present feeling in awe of her,

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immediately admitted her. She instantly went up stairs, entered Madame du Valois's room, and without either announcing herself, or prefacing her visit with any apology, or appearing to notice Madame du Valois's companion, who had thrown herself upon a bed to rest, she took the nun by the hand, and led her aside to the window, where she at once began to speak to her of the high dignity and honor, and supereminent distinction, conferred upon those who are called to suffer for righteousness' sake, and who prove steady to the end. She then continued exhorting, strengthening, and consoling her, in a manner so full of majesty, grace, and goodness, blended with such awful severity, that the nun was in equal astonishment, both at the matter and the manner of her discourse. She informed her of the blessed ends of many of her sisters, and of the great change that was taking place in the public mind about Port Royal, and many other circumstances, of which Madame du Valois had been kept in profound ignorance; at length,

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after giving Madame du Valois a most solemn charge, and exhorting her to be faithful to the end, she, without awaiting any reply, or taking any leave, stepped into her carriage, which setting off at full speed, was quickly out of sight, leaving Madame du Valois in the utmost astonishment.*

There was an extraordinary dignity in the manner of her unknown visitor, which, joined to the surprise occasioned by so unexpected an incident, prevented the nun from interrupting her discourse, by asking her who, or what she was, or whence she came? but, when Madame du Valois had recovered from the stupor of her first amazement, she sent to question the people of the inn. They were as much surprised as herself, nor could she gain the least trace of intelligence concerning this extraordinary visitant. Nevertheless, whoever she might be, the zeal and strength of her man-

* Clemencet, tom. x. p. 253 to 255. Bes. tom. iii. pp. 244, 245.

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ner, at once filled the heart of Madame du Valois with peace, consolation, and strength, so that the very recollection of this singular incident, fortified and supported her during the three remaining years of captivity, which she had yet to pass at Mantes.*

On her arrival there, Madame du Valois was treated with the greatest severity, but in a very few months, she gained, as at Chartres, the esteem and affection of the whole convent; and there is every reason to believe, that the rapidity with which this change took place, was very much accelerated, by the repeated letters sent to the superior, by her kind friend the Abbess, as well as by the two ladies: to whatever cause, however, we may ascribe it, the event is certain; she was held in the highest veneration by the whole community. One of the nuns has left us an account, of which the substance is as follows:

"At the time Madame du Valois was sent

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* See note, page 191.

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to us, by the bishop of Chartres, we received letters (from her friend the Abbess) describing her as a person of the utmost sweetness and evenness of temper, who, from her natural disposition, as well as from the influence of religion, was most engaging and agreeable to live with. Her goodness, as well as the strength and intelligence of a superior mind, was visible the first moment she entered the house, and her application to acquaint herself with all the usages of our community, and to conform herself to them, even in the most minute particulars, soon obtained her the high esteem and regard of every individual. Madame de Valois might indeed thank God, for having given to her, as he formerly did to Solomon, the spirit of wisdom, and of knowledge without measure; and as her rare intellectual powers had been cultivated by assiduous study, so her naturally happy temper was perfected by being grounded on Christian resignation and deep self-abasement. The long exercise of every Christian virtue, had induced a perfection of holiness, such

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as we have never witnessed elsewhere. She was always most exact in attending church, during the time of divine service. She was not, as you know, allowed to be a partaker of the holy communion, but she always remained prostrate during the whole time of its administration; and it was easy to see the acute pain she felt at the deprivation, by the abundance of tears which she could not restrain."*

"She was in the habit of making frequent prostrations during divine service, and always remained the last in the church."†

"She placed her enemies in the same rank with her friends, praying every day in private, for the one as well as the other. Unless seriously ill, she never failed rising at two in the morning. The Psalms were familiar to her. She was most abstemious in all her habits, fasting and abstaining even beyond her strength. Patient under severe

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* See Clem. x. Lettre d'une Religieuse de Mantes sur le sœur de Valois, pp. 256, 257, 258, 259, 260.

† Ibid.

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sufferings, and the most contumelious ill treatment, her only complaint was, that she experienced more indulgence than she deserved; and whether her meals were served hot or cold, early or late, she always manifested the same evenness of temper. She always dispensed with the assistance of others as much as possible, performing every service for herself of which she was capable, continually sweeping her own room, or making her bed, before the sister who was appointed to wait upon her, was up; and not only helping her, but by her pious conversation, good advice, and a thousand nameless kindnesses, serving her in much more essential ways, so that when Madame du Valois quitted us, the poor girl was quite in despair, saying she had lost her all."*

"If Madame du Valois eminently inspired respect, she was likewise eminent for her attention and respect to others. Her attention to our Abbess, was accompanied

* See note *, page 194.

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by an air of respectful deference, which never for an instant forsook her. She never pardoned herself the very least omission as it respected her; and if she had, by the least thing, (though unwittingly) given her a moment's pain, she always instantly threw herself on her knees, and most humbly implored her pardon, never closely examining, on these occasions, on whose side the error was, so constant was her patience, during even the time in which she was persecuted almost beyond any human endurance but her's."*

"Indeed she continually acted in the same manner to others, for she had that sincere love of peace, that she never thought any thing, but sin, too great a price to pay for it."†

"Her charity embraced every person alike, so that each individual appeared to possess the same place in her kindness and affection. It might be said with the greatest truth, that next to close communion

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* See note *, page 194. † Ibid.

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with God, her greatest delight was to make others happy. Naturally attentive and polite, her manners were supereminently distinguished for an affectionate sympathy, a perfect and finished propriety, yet without affectation, and in the spirit of the Gospel; so that what was originally bestowed upon her by sweetness of temper, high birth, and exquisitely cultivated taste, grace had softened down, blended, and grafted upon the root of Christian love, meekness, and humility. She was, indeed, most tender, sympathising, and prudent; a perfect model of Christian friendship. She loved retirement in her room, and never was seen passing or repassing, but to visit or console the sick. This, indeed, occurred continually, as she was always sent for by all who were in any distress. She possessed a peculiar talent for entering, not only into the griefs, but into the most minute shades of the feelings of others, but without weakening or flattering them. Every body who visited her cell (and that was every body in affliction) was quite sure of being well received;

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it was observed, that no one, even amongst those who entered it with the most dejected countenances, ever quitted her without being more disposed both to find consolation, and to perform firmly her duty. All, in Madame de Valois, her placid and intelligent countenance, her gentle and dignified manner, nay, even her very tone of voice, was regulated and modulated by her piety, and her peculiar character; and its very accents and inflexions, at once even and firm, were inflected by sweet and placid benevolence, and tenderness of sympathy, at once supporting yet touching the heart."*

"She had eminently an upright and firm mind, a sympathising heart, and an acute discernment and discrimination. Yet that very penetration, appeared to afford her a new means of exercising Christian charity; for whilst it prevented her from being duped by the wicked, it always rendered her sympathy peculiarly alive to their besetting temptations. Her devotion, solid as it was,

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* See note *, page 194.

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had no austerity; so that all the children, even the very least, loved to approach her, and often asked, as a reward, to visit her. She had always some little good word to give them; but with sweetness and reverence, and not too long. Even to them, she laid herself out to be kind; for whenever she had any little delicacy sent her, which often happened, as she was universally respected and beloved, she would only just taste it, out of civility, though a great invalid, but set it apart to keep it for them.

"It was only on festival days that the bishop allowed her to join the community at recreation, where she was always asked for, and her society earnestly sought. Her conversation, indeed, was the delight of the whole community, as her example was its edification. Though she was so much looked up to, on account of her rare acquirements, as well as of her eminent piety, her society was so far from imposing any constraint, that if she was a few moments later than usual, the most earnest inquiries were

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always made after her; and if, from indisposition, or from devotion, she spent the time in her room, the disappointment was visible on every countenance.*

"A person of so kind a heart as Madame du Valois, could not forget her own relations; accordingly, she considered them as ranking in the first place amongst those neighbours whom our Saviour has commanded us to love as ourselves. She entertained a constant correspondence with them, not with a view of seeking her own amusement, but to render them all the services of friendship, continually participating in their interests or pleasures, with a view of leading them to God; of supporting them amidst the sorrows of life, and preventing them from wandering amidst its dissipating pleasures. All her letters, and she had numerous correspondents, were eminently distinguished by their Christian spirit, which spread its unction over the rare talents of the writer. She was very reserved in men-

* See note *, page 194.

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tioning her hardships and trials; indeed, all ill usage appeared to slide at once off her mind, as the rain off a polished laurel leaf; on the contrary, the least instance of kindness was never forgotten, but was often the subject of her letters; so that it has happened, that persons who had continually maltreated her, in the most scandalous manner, have had the shame of being thanked by her friends for their kindness, which, if it happened but in one instance, her grateful heart never failed to record. It was not from dissimulation or reserve, nor even, if one may so say, from a point of duty, that she forbore to speak of her afflictions; but it seemed as though her heart was so full of heavenly joy and peace, and so replete with love to others, that they did not in reality occupy her mind. Madame du Valois was very assiduous in working with her hands, being always occupied when in conversation, with her spinning, knitting, or other useful work; the fruits of which she always distributed amongst others, never reserving

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any thing for herself. On every occasion we all addressed ourselves to her, well knowing she was equally ready, affectionately to receive, and effectually to serve us all."*

"When she left us, we were distressed indeed. Our only consolation was, the certainty that the blessing of God, and the peace of God, would attend her every where: it was this consideration alone which reconciled the preceding monastery in which she had been placed, to her loss."†

After the death of Louis the fourteenth, when the other nuns of Port Royal were recalled, persons interested themselves particularly in behalf of Madame du Valois, who was the only one still debarred from receiving the sacraments.‡

God raised up to her a powerful and able protectress, in the dowager Princess of Condé. But as her friends wished to avoid hurting the feelings of the Cardinal de Noailles, by placing her in his diocese; she

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* See note *, page 194. † Ibid.

‡ Clem. x. pp. 261, 265, 266, 267. Bes. iii. pp. 245, 246.

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was not united to the other nuns of Port Royal in the monastery of Malnoue.

The place chosen for her residence was the abbey of Estrées, a very respectable monastery in the diocese of Evreux; where she was to be received with honor as a guest, instead of being guarded as a prisoner.*

In the mean time, the Cardinal de Noailles, deeply penitent for the part he had taken in the destruction of Port Royal, resolved, as far as possible, to repair the evils his irresolution had occasioned. He had long observed in secret, the conduct of Madame de Valois; convinced, by her unshaken firmness, united with meekness and patience, of her extraordinary piety, he began to honor her as a saint; and, unasked, and of his own accord, freely proposed to her an immediate participation in the sacrament. He issued an order, that, in passing from Mantes to Evreux, she should pay a visit of some considerable time at Paris, where she should have full liberty, as often as she pleased, to visit all her Port

* See note ‡, page 202.

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Royal sisters, and other Christian friends.*

To do her greater honor, it was fixed that she should receive the sacrament at the great church of St. Genevieve. From motives of delicacy to the Cardinal, who had so long withheld her from participating in them, she fixed the time at four in the morning, with a view to privacy; but such was the deep interest excited by her constancy and piety, that notwithstanding the earliness of the hour, and the severity of the season, the cathedral was thronged by an innumerable concourse of people, whom a sympathy with her wrongs, had collected together. They stood in profound silence, uncovered, during the ceremony; and scarcely was the service concluded, when the whole assembly, as with one accord, prostrated themselves, to give thanks with her, and for her. The tears which flowed from every eye sufficiently shewed their sincerity. On this happy termination of all her sufferings, Madame du Valois was quite overpowered; when however she

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* See note ‡, page 20

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was at length sufficiently able to compose herself to speak, she said, "That she had at length obtained the summit of all her desires; in short," said she, "but one moment can exceed the joy of this, that in which I shall be dissolved, to be united for ever with that Saviour in whose body and blood I have now had the favor again to participate."*

This last wish was not, however, to be immediately granted. The virtue of this admirable nun, had passed through the trial of adversity and contumely, it was now to endure the yet more difficult trial of honor and sudden prosperity.†

The Princess of Condé, her friend and protectress, was equally delighted with her new friend, and proud of having compassed the deliverance of so eminent a saint. She was also very anxious to profit by Madame du Valois' stay in Paris, to edify herself and all her numerous friends by her con-

* Clem. x. 267 to 274. Bes. iii, 245. 247, Relat. der Cap.

† Ibid.

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versation, which was as agreeable to her as a woman of literature, as it was valuable on account of her piety. Madame de Condé was influenced also by another motive; she was resolved to do public honor to the virtue of her friend, and to hold her forth as an object of public respect, in the very midst of her most determined and powerful enemies. She therefore obtained the Cardinal's permission to have her at her own palace, where she appropriated to her a suite of apartments. She also took her for three weeks to the calvary of the Luxembourg, where Madame duValois was compelled to receive visits and congratulations of an innumerable concourse of persons distinguished alike for rank, talent, and merit. Princes and princesses, cardinals, dukes, bishops; in short, persons of piety, talent, and nobility, then in Paris, vied with each other in waiting upon her, and shewing her marked deference and honor.* Amongst this multitude, she was not the

* See note *, page 205.

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least glad to see her dear friends, the two ladies at Chartres, who visited Paris to see her once more.

All her visitors were edified by her modesty, her love of silence and seclusion, and her enlightened piety; but above all, with her reserve, in answering the multitude of questions addressed to her concerning her persecutions. This she did with so adroit and spontaneous a generosity, that she seemed naturally, when questioned concerning her hardships, only to remember instances of kindness. So that all her most bitter persecutors, who trembled for fear of detection, were astonished at finding themselves treated with unusual respect, on account of some single instance of kindness, which she had contrived to select, out of years of unmitigated barbarity and ill-treatment. She seemed indeed an instance of the common proverb, that whilst the evil spirit furnishes the memories of evil men with a record of injuries, in order to torment them with baleful passions and gloomy anticipa-

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tions, a guardian angel stores that of the just with images of good, which gild the future with hope, and refresh the heart for the present, by spontaneously suggesting happy and tranquillizing recollections. The mode, however, in which she spoke of her enemies, was by no means peculiar to Madame du Valois, all the nuns of Port Royal spoke of their persecutors in the same terms of kindness.*

Whilst at Paris, Madame du Valois made the most diligent inquiries respecting the unknown visitor who had so seasonably met her on the road from Chartres to Mantes; but she never could obtain the least information, nor meet with the least tidings of any person in any degree answering to her description.†

Madame du Valois then went to visit her Port Poyal sisters, at Malnoue, where she staid a considerable time, to the very great

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* Clem. x. p. 269. Bes. iii. p. 247. Relat. de Cap.
† Clem. x. p. 269. Bes. iii. p. 245.

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joy and comfort of both parties. She also, at the wish of the Princess of Condé, visited several other convents, who had heard of her piety and misfortunes, and who were exceedingly anxious to see her.*

Madame du Valois, however, was far averse from seeking honor of men. After staying a few weeks at Paris, which was an indispensable mark of respect to her benevolent friend, the Princess of Condé, she prepared to quit the palace, where she was treated with the highest respect, and the most distinguished consideration, to go to her future habitation, the monastery of Etrées. The Princess, though unable, from her own infirmities, to accompany her, would not suffer Madame du Valois to go alone; accordingly, a lady and her daughter, who were intimate friends of Madame de Condé, and who had formed sentiments of the deepest veneration and attachment to Madame du Valois, determined to accompany her the whole way, and to prepare the

* Clem. x. pp. 269, 270. Bes. iii. pp. 246, 247.

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community at Etrées, to receive her with the respect to which she was so justly entitled.*

Madame du Valois accordingly quitted that polished capital, and those distinguished circles which, after an absence of thirty years, she had only re-visited in submission to the will of God. She took a most affectionate leave of her Port Royal sisters, expressing mutual pleasure at having met together, and interchanging mutual promises of a constant correspondence.†

Madame du Valois then set out on her journey, rejoicing to return to her beloved retirement, and to have escaped from that crowded metropolis, where she received some of the most extraordinary honors that ever were paid to a religious and a female, with as much indifference, disengagement, and tranquillity of mind, as if she had been holding the recreation in the seclusion of a monastery.‡

The community of Etrées, whither Ma-

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* Bes. iii. p. 247. Clem. x. p. 273.
† Clem. x. pp. 273, 274. ‡ Ibid.

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dame du Valois was to be placed, consisted, at that period, of thirty-five nuns. The eldest was thirty-five years old, and the youthful Abbess only about eighteen. All the ladies in that convent were sprung from highly respectable families. They were ladies of superior education; their conduct also was very decorous; so that the monastery was esteemed a very respectable one: but they were by no means distinguished for piety. They were indeed kind and well disposed, and their conduct was far from exhibiting any flagrant irregularity; but they were totally ignorant of spiritual religion. And though they had refused the direction of the Jesuits, yet they were by no means pleased at the idea of having a Port Royal nun imposed upon them.*

The ladies who accompanied Madame du Valois, immediately perceived the secret reluctance of the nuns, notwithstanding the politeness, and even humanity, with which they received her. They there-

* Bes. iii. p. 247. Clem. x. pp. 274, 275.

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fore requested to speak with the young Abbess in private; and not only dispelled all her apprehensions, by telling her of the amiable qualities of the nun they had brought; but they soon excited the most powerful interest and sympathy in her mind, by drawing a lively picture of all Madame du Valois' sufferings, her virtues, and her piety. So that when her conductresses, at the end of two or three days, took their leave, they left the whole community deeply impressed with respect, veneration, and pity for her, and congratulating themselves on the prize Providence had bestowed on their house.*

Experience soon convinced them of the truth of the ladies' assertions. They all treated her with the greatest respect, kindness, and attention; and endeavoured, by every means in their power, to give her comfort, and make her happy; and studied to anticipate all her wants by furnishing her with books, prints, and every other

* Bes. iii. p. 247. Clem. x. p. 274 to 276.

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amusement they could think of, and giving her full liberty to attend the sacraments, correspond with her friends; and, in short, to do whatever she would have wished had she been in her own community.*

Nor was the kindness of the amiable nuns lost to themselves before God. Madame du Valois became to their house as the ark to that of Obed Edom. She proved a means of benediction to the whole community; and she was the blessed instrument God used to diffuse the knowledge, and the practice of the truth, throughout the whole monastery. Her pious example, her edifying conversation, and the relations she made of the saints she had known at Port Royal, made a lively impression on them; and by the grace of God they became thoroughly changed. The monastery of Etrées set an example of piety and regularity; and its instruction soon proved a source of blessing to the whole neighbourhood. The young Abbess became truly

* See note, page 212.

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converted; and being aware of the heavy responsibility of her charge, and that others possessed not only the graces, but the gifts requisite for it, in a greater degree than herself, she, with unfeigned humility, gave up the office, and became a simple nun.*

But the usefulness of Madame de Valois was by no means merely confined to the monastery of Etrées. She had the pleasure and satisfaction of proving equally a blessing both to her friends and to her enemies.†

The Princess of Condé maintained a continual correspondence with her, which terminated in her complete conversion; but, amongst all the friends whom her eminent piety had gained, none was more zealous than the Cardinal of Noailles. He also requested permission to correspond with her. He became her public and zealous protector. Nay, he even sent her an edition of his works, and especially of his beautiful pastoral instruction of 1719; nor did he

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* See note, page 212.

† Clem. x. pp. 276, 277, 282, 282. Bes. iii. p. 248.

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fail, amongst other proofs of esteem, continually to recommend himself to her prayers.*

In this monastery Madame du Valois continued till the time of her death, which took place on the 7th of November, 1722, on the day preceding that on which forty years before, she had consecrated herself to God by the indissoluble vows of religion.†

She continued an example of edification to the house of Etrées till her latest breath. She was the consolation of the afflicted, and the strength of the feeble. The three last years of her life were spent in almost continual bodily sufferings. At length she was seized with her last illness, which continued for six weeks. During twelve days and thirteen nights she was in the agonies of death. She never once, in all this while, opened her mouth to complain. For a considerable part of the time she could not speak, but whenever it pleased the Lord to

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* See note †, page 214.

† Clem. x. p. 282 to 287. Bes. iii. p. 246 to 248.

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open her lips, her mouth shewed forth his praise. She seemed, amidst the most excruciating pains, to forget present sufferings in the sense of eternal enjoyments. She shewed a perfect detachment from this earth, and all her thoughts were in heaven. She perpetually had read to her the accounts of the passion of our Saviour. The whole monastery being collected round her bed in tears, and being cast down by the deepest sorrow, she alone retained her presence of mind, and consoled and supported them in a manner equally sympathising and vigorous. As for herself, her joy was uninterrupted. Her death was not merely peaceful, it was triumphant and glorious.*

No epitaph by any human pen has reached our time, but her eulogium is written in the sanctity and exemplary piety of the community she left behind to mourn her loss. Meanwhile, her memory is held in eternal benediction. Whilst, in the long bright summer's eve, the villagers teach

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* See note †, page 215.

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their infants to clasp their little hands, and lisp their prayers over the green sods that mark her grave; they little think that all the blessings with which God has comforted their neighbourhood, were owing, in the first instance, to Port Royal, and to the fidelity with which the Mere Angelique, when a girl of seventeen, corresponded with the religious impressions which the grace of God then vouchsafed her.

Such was Port Royal; the foundation of its faith was Scripture, the object of its trust was Christ, the great sacrifice for sin; and their mode of apprehending him was by a spiritual and divine teaching, the work of God upon that heart which waits upon him in spirit and in truth. Thus taught of God, they believed with the heart unto righteousness, and out of the abundance of a renewed heart, their mouths uttered the praises of God, and their lives exhibited the genuine fruits of faith. Such was the source of the holiness of their lives, the unshaken constancy of their perseverance, and the triumphant blessedness of their

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ends. And, whatever minor differences may distinguish various bodies of Christians, experience, as well as Scripture, declares, that wherever these polar truths have been faithfully and spiritually maintained, whether in the Catholic, the Lutheran, the Calvinist, or any other branch of that church which is rooted and grounded in Christ; the same strength of faith, the same good fruits, and the same blessed ends have uniformly appeared, bearing testimony, that this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent; being taught these things by a diligent searching of Scripture, which testifies of him; and having them imprinted on the heart by that divine spirit, without the teaching of which, no man can, in truth, call Christ Lord, or so believe with the heart unto righteousness, as to bring forth the fruits which are of the spirit by faith.

We must not conclude this account of the destruction of Port Royal, without a brief notice of the faithful servants who were banished at the final dispersion.

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Their annals are indeed brief and simple. They do not indeed present the same strong interest, or the same variety of incident, which are exhibited in the biographies of the great lights of the Port Royal school. Their noble descent, or pre-eminent talents, necessarily placed them in the foremost rank under every persecution, and upheld them as especial marks to the assaults of their enemies. Nevertheless, although the absence of these worldly advantages gave less splendid relief to the virtues of their poor brethren in the eyes of men, to the Christian reader, their lives will be, perhaps, the more interesting on that very account. He will delight to trace the all-sufficient power of divine grace, unassisted by any temporal considerations, and to contemplate its genuine effects, unadorned by any extraneous decorations. He will see the most noble constancy where no motive of human honor could ever have been suggested; the most bountiful charity bestowed at the expense of the first necessaries of

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life, by givers who could receive no meed of praise; and he will behold a celestial wisdom imparted from above, to those whose want of education wholly precluded them from being enlightened by human learning. In a word, whether in the learned or unlearned, he will uniformly behold the same divine principle, bringing forth abundantly the same good fruit.

And if the lowly graves of these unlettered saints, boast no sculptured marble, and if the even tenor of their holy lives have called forth no pompous eulogium, yet not one of them is forgotten before God; and as they were joint partakers in the very same faith, and in the same good works, with their pious and enlightened masters and instructors, so likewise, in the great day of the Lord, shall they jointly receive with them, the amaranth crown of immortality, and the palm of victory.

LOUIS L'EPARGNEUR was born at Thierache. He was shoemaker at Port Royal des Champs for above ten years, and was

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one of the brightest examples of devotion, and of the practice of every Christian virtue. Whilst at his work, he had always the New Testament open before him, on a kind of little desk which he had contrived on purpose. In this book he was continually reading, or else repeating the Psalter, all of which he knew by heart, and generally recited whilst he worked. Indeed he had read both these books so often, and with such deep attention, that he could repeat the whole of the New Testament by heart, as well as the Psalter. Being driven from Port Royal in 1709, he retired to St. Pelagie, in the Fauxbourg St. Marçeau, at Paris, where he continued precisely the same habits; till at length joining the fraternity of Cordwainers, he edified them by his exemplary piety till the time of his death, which took place the eleventh of June, 1716. His remains were deposited in the burying ground of the Holy Innocents.*

* Clem. x. pp. 292, 293.

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PETER BOURCHIER (who being very tall, went by the name of Peter the Great) was born at Gresset, a village in Gascony. He was, by trade, a vine-dresser. In that humble station, he performed all the duties of a real Christian. On working days he followed his occupation assiduously in the spirit of penitence; Sundays and festivals he hallowed by regularly attending the offices of the church. He formed a little society of several piously disposed young men in his own class of life, with whom he could unite in worshipping God, in simplicity of heart and godly sincerity. They all ardently sought to hear and study the word of God itself, for which they had an insatiable desire, and they eagerly embraced every opportunity of hearing it. This, however, seldom occurred in their parish, as the curate had very little the benefit of his flock at heart, and never preached, so that they received no instruction, unless he was either indisposed or absent, when the priest who supplied his place, always read the Gospel and preached. Under this spiritual

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famine, they continually prayed to God for grace to apply the little they did hear, and to serve him in as far as they knew, in the true spirit of the Gospel.*

The thought that the grace of God was sufficient for them, and that his divine power could devise means to instruct them, as it brought instruction to Cornelius of old, was the only consolation of Bourchier in his continual labors. His whole ambition was to become thoroughly acquainted with the Gospel, and as the curate was so remiss in performing his duty, he resolved to endeavour to learn to read himself. Bourchier was then above thirty, and all his neighbours considered such an undertaking as a piece of madness. Peter, however, was not deterred. He earnestly prayed for the blessing of God on this humble attempt to become acquainted with his will, and rising some hours earlier to do his day's work, he spent the afternoon in searching out the two

* Clem. x. pp. 293, 294.

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or three families in the village who could read; and in begging them, not to give him money, but a little instruction, that he might be able to read the Scripture. As soon as Bourchier was able to decypher it a little, he began to read the Gospel to his companions, and to converse with them upon it, inciting them to follow his example. All their leisure time these young vine-dressers spent in studying the Scriptures; and while they followed their occupations, they contrived to work near each other, and to converse on the divine truths they had been learning; so that they lost not a single moment for instruction, and every penny they could save from their wages they gave to the poor.*

Like Cornelius, their prayers and alms came up for a memorial before God,† and it pleased him to send them a truly apostolic and eminent servant of Christ, to break to them the bread of his holy word, and to

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* Clem. x. p. 294. † Clem. x. pp. 294, 295.

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nourish their souls fully with it. This instrument in the hand of God, was Father Vincent Comblat, a Cordelier, who pitying the darkness of the people, and animated by an enlightened zeal for his divine master, and by love for the souls of men, travelled from village to village on foot, purposely to preach and expound the Gospel.*

The zeal of Father Comblat, the purity of his doctrine, and above all, the closeness with which he applied Scripture, (to the exposition of which his exhortations were always confined) soon drew down upon him many persecutions, both from false brethren of his own order, and from various other unworthy ecclesiastics.†

The providence of God having led this holy man to the village of Gresset, Peter Bourchier, and his companions, were the most ardent to profit by this divine favor, regarding Father Vincent as the apostle

* See note †, page 224. † Clem. x. p. 295.

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sent of God in answer to their prayers, and his instructions as manna, of which they could not lose an atom. This excellent missionary was indeed a man of God. Not satisfied with expounding Scripture every morning and evening, when the labourers returned from their work, he went abroad in the fields during the day, working with them himself, and instructing the labourers during their employments.*

Bourchier was so impressed by these instructions, and touched at this proof of love, that he would never quit Father Vincent, but attaching himself to his service, followed him whithersoever he went.†

Peter always worked at whatever employment he was capable, in all the places where Father Vincent travelled, as indeed he likewise did himself, whenever he was not engaged in instructing the people‡. By this means, they both lived by the labor of their hands, without being burthen-

* See note †, page 225. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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some to any. This disinterested conduct stamped a seal on their instructions. It edified the sincere, and caused a great number of conversions, both amongst the careless and the profligate. God shedding an abundant blessing upon labors so apostolic.*

Father Vincent being obliged to go to Paris on business, did not fail to visit Port Royal des Champs. As usual, he took Peter with him. Peter no sooner entered this retreat, than he seemed to be in that new earth where righteousness and holiness shall dwell, where truth shall be known and revered, and where Christian charity shall fully prevail. Peter left Port Royal with regret, but with a hope of returning at some future period. He, however, continued to accompany his benefactor, Father Vincent, with the same zeal and fidelity, till that excellent and apostolic man was interdicted from preaching, and closely confined in a convent by order of his superior, who would

* Clem. x. pp. 295, 296.

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no longer suffer his faithful companion to remain with him, or share his imprisonment.*

Overcome with grief, but compelled to quit his dear master, Peter determined to follow the inclination of his heart, which led him to Port Royal. He resolved, however, first to return to Gresset, and make his intention known to his old associates; who were so much pleased with it, that many of them joined in his design. Accordingly they were all received at Port Royal with the Christian charity which so eminently characterized that holy monastery.†

The care of the mill was committed to Peter, and when not employed there, he worked in the garden. In these occupations his conduct was a means of edification to the whole house.‡

When his daily labor was over, he was solely occupied in prayer, meditation, or in

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* See note, page 227.

† Clem. x. p. 296. ‡ Ibid.

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studying the Holy Scriptures, upon which he continually conversed with his companions. He referred to them, and quoted from them with so much readiness, that they appeared to have been the study of his whole life.*

It would be impossible to have excelled Peter in disinterestedness. He never would receive any thing from the nuns beyond his food and cloathing, still less would he accept any thing from others.†

One day, having succeeded in getting a stag, which the Dauphin was hunting, out of a pond, that Prince immediately presented Peter with twenty-five crowns as a recompence.‡

Peter, however, would on no account accept it, but replied, "That the holy nuns he had the happiness to serve, provided for all his wants with so much Christian charity, that he wanted nothing. That Providence on which he relied, had never forsaken him; and that if he continued faithful to God,

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* Clem. x. p. 297. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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he was very sure he never should be forsaken." The officers of the Dauphin, full of admiration, continued to press him to accept the money, telling him, that if he had no occasion for it himself, he could give it to the poor. He replied, "Gentlemen, you can give it to the poor yourselves, which will be better."*

On another occasion, Peter having been compelled to receive a handsome present by the Count of Thoulouse, whom he had assisted in catching some game, he went and took it immediately to the turn at the monastery, saying, "I do not know what to do with this money, it is an encumbrance to me; lay it out in butter if you will."†

He was so truly detached from worldly interests, that he never would permit the nuns of Port Royal to secure him a small pension, which they were very anxious to do, foreseeing the destruction which was

* Clem. x. pp. 297, 298. † Ibid.

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likely to fall on their house. The nuns having repeatedly urged him to accept it, he generously replied, "that although he was feeble and tottering, and at a very advanced age, neither the providence of God, nor his promises to his faithful servants, would ever be overthrown; and this solid foundation was more secure than any thing they could do for him; that his heavenly Father, who cared even for the little sparrows, and cloathed even the lilies of the field, would assuredly not forsake him. The Gospel itself, he said, was his security; and that his whole source of disquietude and anxiety, was, lest he should not be sufficiently faithful to God, who had bestowed such abundant, and such constant mercies upon him, especially that of having enabled him to learn to read his holy Gospel, and also that of having made him known to the house of Port Royal."*

His continual recollection and humility

* Clem. x. pp. 298, 299.

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charmed all who saw him. Whenever he approached the holy table, he took off his shoes, and drew near bare-footed, to shew his profound respect for the sacred and tremendous mysteries, as they are termed by the Fathers of the first and second centuries. The conduct, the countenance, and whole demeanour of this admirable man was such, that the very sight of him brought to mind those words of our Lord, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to the simple, and to babes." These words were indeed fully accomplished in this unlettered saint,*

Peter had resided nearly thirty years in Port Royal, when the adversary of all good succeeded in the destruction of this sanctuary.†

He was driven from the house in 1709, with all the other servants, when he was

* See note, page 231. † Ibid.

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offered, by the *royal* bounty, through Mons. d'Argenson, fifty sols, (that is, twenty-five pence, English,) as a remuneration for thirty years' service. This he absolutely refused. He retired to the house of a friend of Port Royal, who resided at Paris in the Faux-bourg St. Antoine. There he remained five years, pursuing the same recluse habits, and maintaining the same devotional spirit as at Port Royal.*

The nuns of Notre Dame de Liésse, having expressed a strong desire to attach this excellent man to the service of their house, his kind host would not oppose it, though he considered Peter's removal as a serious loss, and as a punishment for not having more abundantly profited by his example.†

Peter was entertained with all the consideration and Christian charity due to his eminent piety. He occupied himself as a gardener in his new situation, working as

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* See note, page 231. † Clem. x. pp. 299, 300.

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much as his strength would allow, which, however, was but little, as he was at the time of entering the convent, above seventy-five. At the end of a few years, being wholly past labor, the nuns obtained him an admission in the hospital of incurables. Here, as usual, his Bible accompanied him. Though unable to do any thing else, he occupied himself in spreading the savor of the Gospel of Christ amongst his brethren, edifying the whole house during a period of nearly three years that he lived there. At length he expired, full of an ardent desire to enjoy the presence of God, for which he had sighed so many years, and whom he had served so faithfully. He devoutly finished his race in the month of December, 1720, aged eighty years.*

PETER MOLIAC (surnamed Peter the Little) should not be separated from Peter Bourchier, who was chiefly instrumental in his conversion. Both had been followers of

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* Clem. x. pp. 299, 300.

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Father Vincent, and both had enjoyed the advantage of residing at Port Royal.*

At the destruction of that Establishment, Peter Moliac, with two other domestics, who were also driven away, retired with Peter Bourchier to a friend's house, in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine; who placed him in a house he had lately purchased, adjoining the church of St. Nicholas des Champs. There he was attacked by the scurvy; and, contrary to the wish of the charitable friend whose guest he was, removed to the Hotel Dieu, in hopes of obtaining superior medical advice. Here the Sisters of Charity, who attended the sick, and all indeed who saw him, were greatly edified by his piety.†

He died on the twenty-fifth of July, 1724, in the sentiments of a genuine Christian, whose piety had been both founded and maintained by the constant and habitual study of the Gospel.‡

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* Clem. x. p. 300.

† Clem. x. pp. 303 and 301. ‡ Ibid.

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His friend attended to his funeral, and had him buried in the church-yard of the Holy Innocents.*

This holy gardener left behind him a will, which is too edifying to be passed over.†

We insert the principal part of it.

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

"I, the undersigned, PETER MOLIAC, formerly under-gardener of the Abbey of Port Royal des Champs, being in sound health of body and mind, and being seriously engaged in considering without delay (seeing I am at so advanced an age) the account which I must so shortly give at the judgment seat of Christ; I therefore commit to writing this my last will and testament, consecrating it to the glory of the most holy and adorable Trinity, one only true God, in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with an earnest desire to be with Jesus Christ, and through Jesus

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* See note †, page 235. † Ibid.

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Christ the worshipper of this ineffable mystery.*

"I offer to the Majesty of God my bodily death, as one part of the wages of sin; but which, through his grace, shall make an end of all the fruits of sin in me for ever. I likewise submit to the just sentence of Divine Providence, the place, the time, the hour, and the manner of my death, however severe and painful it may be.†

"Prostrate in heart and in spirit at the feet of my Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, my God and my judge; I condemn already all that he will condemn in me; I am overwhelmed with the unspeakable gift of his grace. Let him not enter into judgment with his servant for my many abuses of them, but let him remember that he has freely remitted them all, for the glory of his grace, in the work of my redemption.‡

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* Clem. x. pp. 301, 302. † Clem. x. p. 302.
‡ Clem. x. pp. 302, 303.

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"I supplicate, in particular, all those holy persons, who have, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, been sanctified in the same religious house, where the goodness of God led me for instruction and for edification, by so many bright examples, that they would unite with me in prayer,* that, *by the alone merits and passion* of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, I may obtain the pardon of my sins, and a blessed entrance into life eternal, and the society of the blessed in the courts above.†

"If at the time of my death, I owe any thing to any person, I desire it may be paid, as well as my funeral expenses.‡ I give to the poor, as the fruits of my labor, whatever money may be found to belong to

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* "De s'unir à moi, pour obtenir de la clémence de notre bon Dieu, par les mérites et la passion de son Fils, notre Sauveur, le pardon de mes péchés, et la vie éternelle dans la société des biens-heureux."

† Clem. x. p. 303.

‡ Clem. x. pp. 304, 305.

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me; likewise my effects, books, linen, clothes, and generally whatever I have to give, that the value of all may be devoted to the glory of God, and to the most urgent wants of the poor, according to the judgment of the person to whom I intrust the execution of my will.* What, however, I *wish* is, that the total value of the property I leave, however small it may be, should be entirely laid out in the purchase of NEW TESTAMENTS, to be DISTRIBUTED GRATUITOUSLY throughout the kingdom, wherever they may be thought necessary for the instruction and consolation of the poor. If a part could be sent into the diocese of Bazas, of which I am a native, it would gratify my inclination; but this I altogether leave to the discretion of my executor. These are my last desires, and I revoke every other will I may have made.†

"I have no more to add, but to beseech our Lord Jesus Christ to receive my soul

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* See note ‡, page 238. † Ibid.

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into his peace, patiently awaiting his coming. Even so quickly come, Lord Jesus."

"Done at Paris, 14 January, 1723.

"PETER MOLIAC."*

LEONARD FOURNIER was born on the twentieth of May, 1664, at Bauvrai, on the Loire, in the Diocese of Tours. Immersed in ignorance, and educated amongst persons of the most corrupt manners, it can only be ascribed to a peculiar providence of God, that amidst so many temptations, and with so few helps, he never fell into any acts of outward immorality.†

At an age when children are often abandoned to their own evil passions, and to the examples of corrupt associates, Leonard had the fear of God continually before his eyes, and sought faithfully to regard what he then knew of the divine law.‡

He honored his parents, obeyed them,

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* Clem. x. pp. 305, 306.

† Clem. x. p. 306. ‡ Ibid.

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and submitted to them, without ever departing from the respect due to parents from children. And although their tempers were perverse, and they not only shewed him little kindness, but even treated him very ill, he paid them uniform deference, both in word and deed, continually bearing and forbearing. Convinced that the blessing of fathers established the houses of children, he sometimes threw himself at his father's feet, entreating him in the name of God to bless him. Leonard was the only one of his family who assisted his father in his latter years, and he always considered this favor of God as the source of all those he afterwards received through his divine mercy.*

When Leonard had attained the age of thirty, his family urged him to marry, and had even provided a suitable match; but when this engagement was on the point of being concluded, Leonard suddenly adopted the resolution to devote himself to a single

* Clem. x. pp. 306, 307.

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life, that his affections might be undivided, and that he might be solely engaged in doing what was pleasing to Christ.*

In consequence of this resolution, he determined to withdraw from the temptation offered him, and to abandon his native place. He sold what little he had, and distributed the money, amounting to about five hundred livres, amongst the poor.†

He reserved to himself only one single penny for his journey, and meeting with a poor man, he gave away even that. Thus, if Leonard did not, like St. Paulina, forsake great riches, he, like the Apostles, forsook all he had, to follow Christ; and, like the widow in the Gospel, gave out of his penury even all his living.‡

Released from the incumbrance of the cares of this world, in order to follow Christ more freely, having, like Abraham, left his country and his kindred, not knowing whither he went, yet trusting God would

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* Clem. x. p. 307. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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bring him to a land he would shew him, he resolved to walk before God, and be perfect; Leonard, like Jacob, met an angel to comfort and strengthen him by the way. A man habited like a peasant accosted him, and accompanied him part of the way, talking with him of God in so affecting a manner, that the heart of Leonard burnt within him. Hitherto, Leonard had rather walked by the *spirit* of faith, than by a clear discernment of the *object* of faith. He believed indeed that God is, and was assured that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; but still he was unacquainted with the manner in which alone the mercy of God would be extended to man. He was unacquainted with the scheme of the redemption of man, he had very confined and inadequate notions of what Christ does in his atonement for man, and through his spirit in man. This, which Leonard wanted, his new companion preached to him. He taught him who already believed in God, to believe also in Christ. He instructed him in the mystery

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of Christ, in the necessity of the free-gift, and the power of divine grace; and after defraying his expenses at the inn where they arrived at night, left him, without Leonard's perceiving what was become of him.*

Leonard was led by Providence to Beaugenci, where he arrived on the 29th of May, in the year 1700, on Whitsun-eve. He passed the night under a shed, and confessed himself the next day to the Prior of St. Firmin. The following morning, he presented himself at the holy table to receive Sacrament. It so happened that Leonard was there seen by a woman whom he had accidentally met the evening before, in a violent passion; in consequence of which he had represented to her, that it was a very bad preparation for receiving the Sacrament. The woman was so exasperated at this rebuke, that, on seeing Leonard at church the next day, she

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* Clem. x. pp. 307, 308.

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went to the Prior, and informed him, that the man who offered himself at the table, was not sufficiently sound in mind to receive the holy Eucharist. Without farther inquiry, the Prior passed him twice; but having observed the recollection, modesty, and humility, with which he bore this affront, the Prior sent to him after mass was over, to have some conversation with him, by which he was compleatly undeceived. Amongst other questions, the Prior asked Leonard, what he thought of his refusal? Leonard replied, that it had humbled him before God, knowing himself to be a great sinner, and highly unworthy of so great a favor. The Prior was so pleased with his discourse, that when he dismissed him, he gave him a penny, which Leonard immediately divided with the poor, only reserving half of it for his dinner. He remained some time at Beaugenci, where the same Prior employed him to make a terrace. When his work was finished, Leonard refused to receive any thing for it, saying, it was enough to have had his food. When

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the Prior insisted on paying him, he asked to have given him as an alms a shirt, and money sufficient to purchase a sickle, to work for poor persons, who might not be able to pay a reaper or labourer. His first essay in this benevolent scheme, was made in favor of a poor widow, of the parish of Crevan, where his patience was fully put to the test, by the very untoward temper of her son. Leonard was, however, amply rewarded for the vexation this circumstance occasioned him, by the friendship which he there formed with FRANCIS COMPAGNON, a young vine-dresser, of the village of Paule, in the Diocese of Orleans. Francis was possessed of great piety and enlightened religious knowledge, and though very young, he had already been made an instrument under God, in drawing a great number of persons to his service, by inspiring them with a desire of studying the word of God, and by assembling them in companies to read the New Testament to them. It was equally striking and edifying to see the manner of life of these poor and

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illiterate, but pious and zealous young labourers.*

Nothing could more nearly approach to the piety, the simplicity, and fervent faith of the primitive Christian church. They fasted regularly, although employed in the hard labors of agriculture. Children of ten or twelve years, would fast throughout the whole of Lent; but that which was most remarkably edifying in this little society of peasants was, their perfect harmony and Christian charity, and their continual and assiduous study of the Holy Scriptures. This alone formed their rest and relaxation in the intervals of labor; it was a delightful sight to see these young vine-dressers, in the midst of their vines, with the New Testament in their hands, and the villagers and children gathered around them, listening with mute attention and clasped hands.†

Such was the new friend whom Leonard

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* Clem. x. pp. 309, 310, 311, and notes.

† Clem. x. pp. 310, 311, notes.

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met with at the poor widow's, engaged in the same charitable occupation with himself.*

Francis Compagnon immediately began by teaching Leonard to read, and placing him under the direction of Father Gabaret, a pious and venerable minister of Pamiers. He also introduced him to the service of Pierre Fleuri, a farmer, who was his intimate friend, in the parish of Poilly.†

Leonard found great spiritual benefit and assistance in this family. Prayer, and the perusal of a considerable portion of Scripture, was practised in the house, morning and evening; and when they assembled at dinner, Fleuri treated Leonard as his brother, whilst Leonard obeyed his Master with respect and fear, in simplicity of heart, as rendering service unto the Lord.‡

On every Saturday evening, after Leonard had finished his work, he went to the

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* Clem. x. pp. 310, 311. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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house of his friend, Francis Compagnon, where he spent the night; and early next morning, went with the company of young men already spoken of, to a town about a league distant, where M. Pacori, at five in the morning, delivered an exposition of some passage of Scripture; after which they returned to Paule, to attend high mass. After vespers, Leonard attended the Scripture lecture and instruction, which his friend, Francis Compagnon, gave at his own house.*

Such was the life Leonard pursued till May, 1704, when Madame de Fontpertuis, who was acquainted with his piety, proposed to him to establish himself at the monastery of Port Royal des Champs, in the capacity of gardener. Leonard accepted the offer with delight and thankfulness, and his faithful friend, Francis Compagnon, determined to conduct him there himself.†

Leonard here employed all the leisure

* Clem. x. pp. 311, 312, 313.

† Clem. x. p. 313.

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time his occupations allowed him, in prayer, and in learning to read the Scriptures, but as he read very imperfectly, and with great difficulty, whenever he met any one decently dressed, this poor man would go up to them, and pull out his New Testament, which he always carried about with him, carefully wrapped up, and beg them, for the love of God, to read him something in it; whilst he, in the mean time, would listen on his knees, with the greatest sentiments of love and reverence for the Word of God, and always expressed the most lively gratitude to those who had the kindness to read to him.*

Leonard endeavoured assiduously to put in practice all the instructions he received in Port Royal, and to profit by the examples of eminent piety he saw in that holy house. Being driven from this seclusion in October, 1709, at the same time

* Clem. x. pp. 313, 314.

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with the nuns, he after a short time, returned to Paule, to rejoin his dear friend, Francis Compagnon, from whom he had been separated six years. Compagnon rejoicing to see Leonard again, soon used his endeavours to get him once more into the service of his old master, Peter Fleuri. He had scarcely entered Fleuri's service, when he was taken ill with a fever, and although he soon recovered, it was an illness peculiarly grievous to him, since it precluded his attending the last illness of his dear friend, Francis Compagnon, and deprived him of the consolation of receiving his last farewel.*

Francis Compagnon died on the 19th of August, 1710, in his thirty-sixth year. His death was as triumphant as might have been expected from the holiness of his life. His humility was so unfeigned, that he did not believe there was a greater sinner upon earth than himself. The faith and courage of his pious and venerable mother, at the

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* Clem. x. pp. 314, 315.

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time of his death, was a spectacle truly worthy of admiration, and melted the very hardest hearts. It drew tears from the eyes of every one who had been attracted to the dying scene, by the well-known piety of Francis Compagnon. His excellent mother might have been compared, for constancy and resolution under so severe a trial, to the mother of the Maccabees, or those of St. Symphoria and Melithon.*

After exhorting her dear son, to his latest breath, with a fervency of faith and noble magnanimity, which were the admiration of all present, she, with her own hands, closed his eyes; and when the solemn pause of all present, had sufficiently ascertained that he was really dead, she threw herself on her knees; and raising her hands and eyes to heaven, exclaimed, "It is true, O Lord, that I lose a saint, but it was from thee I received him. O give me grace to restore him to thee freely at thy will, and to

* Clem. x. p. 315, note.

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rejoice for him, rather than to mourn for myself." Such were the noble sentiments with which religion had inspired this poor woman.*

The following year, after the death of Francis Compagnon, Leonard was received as head-gardener of the Abbey of Voisins, in the diocese of Orleans. Here he remained, and during the succeeding twenty-five years of his life, proved a pattern to all, for piety, uniformity, and regularity of conduct. His spirituality and fervor indeed constantly increased. He was heard at prayer at all hours of the night, by those who accidentally happened to pass his chamber door, for he was in the habit of always praying aloud; and, sleeping in a remote part of the house, apart from the rest of the family, he imagined he was not over-heard. He devoted Sundays more particularly to this exercise; the whole of which, as well as holy days, he spent in

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* See note, page 252.

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church, which he only quitted to take his meals.*

On other days, he employed his time after dinner, while his fellow labourers were sleeping, in prayer, and in reading the Scriptures. Even his labor did not suspend his devotional exercises, as every natural object seemed only to recal his heart to God; and every manifestation of the power and goodness of God in the works of nature, was to him a lively type of the infinitely greater wonders he had wrought by the power of his grace.†

As labor was no hindrance to prayer, in the case of this excellent man; so prayer sanctified his labor, without intermitting it. He was often known to refuse the permission offered him, to attend part of the service on working days. On these occasions, Leonard would excuse himself by saying, "that labor was the penance which God himself had imposed upon man; and that it was therefore a principal part of our

* Clem. x. pp. 315, 316. † Ibid. 316.

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submission to God, to labour diligently, assiduously, and cheerfully." He was indeed deeply impressed with the sentence, which condemns man to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow; and found great pleasure and edification in those passages of Scripture, which contain exhortations or promises, to those who labour with fidelity.* The maxims of Port Royal on this subject, were deeply engraven upon his heart. "After you have finished reading the Scriptures," said the Mother Agnes, addressing her nuns, "take up your outward occupations, and pass from one of these employments to the other, with equal affection and complacency, knowing that every employment should be sanctioned by the will of God; that his will gives an equal sanction to each, and therefore ought to render each equally agreeable to you; and in proportion as you are truly devoted to him, you will be without choice."†

"For all the outward practice of reli-

* See note *, page 353. † Religieuse Parf.

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gion may be included under three heads, and all three have respect to God. First, there are those which are purely spiritual, as prayer, attending divine service, &c. Secondly, instruction, in which the end is spiritual, but the means are addressed to the understanding and heart, as in reading Scripture, hearing discourse, &c. Thirdly, all outward occupation and labor. Now in the first set of duties, we speak to God; in the second, he speaks to us; and in the third, we serve and obey him, and the order he has established in the person of our neighbour. Instruction teaches us what we ought to do; prayer obtains us the enabling grace to do it; and outward works are the fruit and visible accomplishment of both one and the other. Neither then can be safely neglected, all are equally necessary to the Christian."*

The diligent toil of Leonard, did not

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* Rel. Parf. pp. 262 and 263, par le Mère Agnés de St. Paul Arnauld, Abbesse de Port Royal.

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prevent his constant practice of the most rigid self-denial, and in proportion to his austerity towards himself, he was always tender and compassionate to his neighbours. He was constantly ready to take upon himself, that which was most toilsome and laborious, in order to relieve others. He was always ready to excuse the defects, or bear with the ill humour of those with whom he had to do; and was so indifferent to the world, that it was as difficult at Voisin, to obtain his consent to their maintaining him for life, as at Port Royal.*

The eminent virtues which distinguished this excellent man, he owed, in a great measure, to the assiduous reading and perusal of the New Testament. He had, at length, entirely overcome the difficulties of learning to read, by the constant perusal of this one book, and he had found in its sacred pages, the living bread of the soul. He there found CHRIST. He there listened to his words with respect and attention.

* Clem. x. pp. 317, 318.

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Leonard had received, in a high degree, the understanding of the words of life; he treasured them in his heart to be the rule of his conduct; he learnt the holiness of religion, the dignity and duties of a Christian, the greatness of the rewards prepared by the Lord, for those who truly love him; and when he spoke of them, it was with raptures that cannot be expressed.*

The remembrance of Port Royal remained deeply engraven upon his heart: about half an hour before he died, when he was speechless, the name of Port Royal, which he heard pronounced, seemed to revive his strength; and raising his hands to heaven, he gave signs of that profound veneration he always expressed for that holy community.†

At length the moment arrived when it pleased the Lord to call his servant from works to rewards. After five days' illness, during which he was constantly occupied

* Clem. x. pp. 319, 320. † Clem, x. pp, 320, 321.

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with thoughts of God, and the desire to be with him, he expired on the twentieth of June, 1736, aged sixty-seven years.*

The majesty of his countenance, after death, was most striking; it excited awe and respect in all who beheld it. His eyes re-opened, and preserved their wonted vivacity and mildness. Those who were present at his death, and who had been edified by his life, were eager to have something which had belonged to him. He was buried at the lower end of the church, near the grate, on the very spot where he usually placed himself when he offered to God his fervent prayers, and which he had so often watered with his tears.†

We shall add to this brief account of the domestics, who were driven away at the destruction of Port Royal, a sketch of the life of one of the recluses of the later period, who deserves a place in this history, from his inviolable attachment to Port

* See note 1, page 258. † Clem. x. pp. 321, 322.

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Royal, from the numerous and unremitting services he rendered the nuns, and we might likewise add, from the very large share he had in their sufferings.*

We allude to M. LE NOIR, DE ST. CLAUDE, who died in the odor of sanctity, on the 30th of December, 1742, at the advanced age of eighty years, after having survived all the nuns, and almost all the recluses.†

M. de St. Claude was one of those men beloved by God, who have been raised up to bestow upon the church, eminent examples of piety, and of constancy under persecution. In his early youth, he, like his predecessor, M. Le Maitre, was distinguished at the bar; but at the age of thirty-three, he suddenly quitted it, to devote himself to a life of retirement, solitude, and piety, in the vale of Port Royal.‡

In this seclusion his life was, indeed, that of a perfect recluse. He rose at two o'clock every morning, and went to matins, where

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* Clem, x. p. 323. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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he staid some hours in the church, and then betook himself to his occupations without returning to bed.*

By this means, he allotted many hours to prayer, meditation, and especially studying the Holy Scriptures, before most persons were awake. The time which was not so employed, he spent in receiving the numerous guests who visited Port Royal, in presiding over the distribution of the abundant alms bestowed by the house, in visiting the poor at their own homes, or in manual labor.†

Humility, sweetness, and a something inexpressibly delicate, noble, and touching, which was visible in all his actions, countenance, and demeanour, soon discovered him to be far beyond what his external appearance of a simple domestic announced. His piety possessed in a peculiar degree, the characteristics of gentleness and perfect uniformity; so that by seeing him once, every person might know what he was every

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* Clem. x. pp. 323, 324, 325. † Ibid.

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day of his life; and indeed, we might truly say, that it was sufficient to know the lives of the first recluses of this holy solitude; to be perfectly acquainted with that of M. de St. Claude during the twelve years he spent at Port Royal, enjoying the peaceful and tranquil delights of silence, prayer, and humiliation.*

In the year 1707, he was obliged, in some degree, to exercise his former function of advocate, in defence of the nuns of Port Royal. When he had occasion to visit Paris, in the service of the monastery, he was not ashamed to appear there in his usual peasant's dress.†

One day, the nuns having desired him to consult their advocate, who was one of the first in the profession, M. de St. Claude presented himself at his door, in his waggoner's frock, gaiters, and staff. The advocate was then in his anti-chamber, taking leave of some company who were going away, and whom he had re-conducted to the

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* See note *, page 261. † Ibid.

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outer door. M. de St. Claude waited till they were gone, when, after paying his compliments, he began to speak of the business upon which he came to consult him.*

The advocate, who was in great practice, was not of a temper to allow his time to be wasted by listening to the tedious irrelevant details of that class of persons, whose ignorance renders them wholly incapable of explaining their affairs with clearness. He therefore abruptly interrupted him, and stopped him short, by asking him at once for the nuns' memorial. M. de St. Claude replied, that he had none, but that he was thoroughly acquainted with the business, if he would have the goodness to give him a hearing.†

"Well, well," replied the advocate, still standing in the anti-chamber, "we shall see; now let us hear the question, and above all, my good man, keep to the point."‡

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* Poulain, p. 252 to 254. Bes. v. pp. 152, 153.

† Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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The rustic orator then opened the business, and explained himself so well, that he was requested to walk in, and whilst continuing his exordium, the advocate, perfectly surprised and satisfied, begged him to come into his study. At length more and more astonished, as the supposed peasant proceeded, at the precision and exactness of his relation, and at the clearness with which he developed all the intricacies of the business, he desired him to sit down, and having heard him to the end, dismissed him, with a polite assurance that he would pay every attention to the business, and requesting him to present his compliments to the community.*

M. de St. Claude slept that night at Paris, at the house of his brother, the canon; and staid the next day, to meet a party of their mutual friends at dinner.†

The advocate whom he had consulted the day before, happened to be amongst the number.‡

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* See note *, page 263. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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On taking their seats at the dinner table, the advocate perceived his client, and was not a little astonished at seeing the supposed errand-man of Port Royal, seat himself with the company; but he was still more so, when the Abbe le Noir, on taking his wine, saluted him, "Your health, my dear brother." "How," said the advocate, "is this gentleman your brother? I have then many apologies to make to him for the ill reception he met with at my house yesterday." He then related the adventure of the day before, to the great entertainment of the company.*

The Jesuits, the unrelenting enemies of Port Royal, were now at this time, ready to give the decisive blow which should sacrifice the nuns of Port Royal to their vengeance and hatred. The zeal of M. de St. Claude, in assisting the defenceless nuns, involved him in their persecutions.†

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* See note *, page 263.

† Clem. x. pp. 325, 326. Bes. v. pp. 158, 159. Poul. iv. p. 257.

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The titles of the Abbey of Port Royal were deposited in his hands; and in order to obtain possession of them, the Jesuits caused him to be seized, with all his papers, and conveyed to the Bastille, where he was confined till the death of Louis the Fourteenth, that is, above seven years, from the period of his detention.*

To a recluse like M. de St. Claude, this captivity was merely changing the placé of his solitude. His piety and spiritual joy seemed to increase with his misfortunes; so that long before the period of his imprisonment had elapsed, he had acquired the respect and admiration even of his persecutors.†

M. de St. Claude's time was not less fully employed in the dungeons of the Bastille, than in the seclusion of Port Royal. Although his whole time was divided between the occupations of studying the Scriptures, prayer, and meditation, he afforded so small a portion of the twenty-four hours to sleep, that he often only laid down his head,

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* See note †, page 265. † Ibid.

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without going to bed. It is, indeed, so literally true, that he had not a moment unappropriated, that when M. d'Argenson (then lieutenant of the police) gave him permission to walk every day, for an hour, in the court, and on the terraces, M. de St. Claude thanked him for the indulgence, but told him he had not sufficient leisure to profit by it, and, in fact, he never once made use of this permission.*

M. d'Argenson was in the practice of frequently paying visits to M. de St. Claude, for whose excellence he soon conceived the highest respect. He frequently said, he had not only never had such a prisoner, but that M. de St. Claude was so excellent, that he did not believe the whole world contained his equal.†

The following anecdote will sufficiently shew, that however warm M. d'Argenson might be in his praises, his good opinion was not so exaggerated as it may seem.‡

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* See note †, page 265. † Ibid.

‡ Clem. x. p. 326 to 328. Bes. v. p. 159. Poul. iv. pp. 259, 260.

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At the same time that M. de St. Claude was incarcerated in the Bastille, a man was confined there, of such a ferocious and brutal disposition, that no one durst approach him. He never spoke, but his words were accompanied by a volley of oaths and blasphemies. He struck every one who approached him, with the most phrenitic violence. Every resource had been resorted to, in order to humanize this monster, but in vain; all the expedients they could devise had failed, when the governor proposed to M. de St. Claude, to undertake this good work. He at first excused himself, through humility, but, on the Governor's insisting with many intreaties, the pious captive said, "that if he ordered him to make the attempt, he would obey him, considering him as the superior in whose hands Providence had then placed him."*

The Governor, who entertained the same high respect for M. de St. Claude, which

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* See note ‡, page 267. † Ibid.

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he inspired in every one who knew him, eagerly seized the means offered, and commanded M. de St. Claude to make the attempt.*

Accordingly, the humble saint was shut up with this human brute. He was greeted, as might have been expected, by his fellow prisoner, who exhausted his ferocity in revilings, in blows, and in yet more savage tokens of the barbarity of his disposition. Whilst this treatment continued, which was till this madman was completely exhausted, silence, patience, and mildness, were the only reply of this man of God. His prayers achieved the rest. The monster with whom he was pent up, having absolutely wearied himself with revilings, violence, and the most contumelious treatment, at length looking up on the face of M. de St. Claude, and seeing the love and patient benignity of its expression still unruffled, suddenly threw himself at his feet, and embracing them, burst into a flood of tears.†

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* See note ‡, page 267. † Ibid.

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When he had recovered his voice sufficiently to speak, he expressed the utmost abhorrence of himself, and veneration for M. de St. Claude, and beseeching his forgiveness in the most humble terms, he implored M. de St. Claude to shew him that religion which could do such great things.*

M. de St. Claude raised his penitent enemy, and embracing him with tears, spent the chief portion of his time in instructing and comforting him, and in shewing him the necessity of an entire and thorough conversion. Nor was his instruction vain. His companion became an entirely altered character. Gradually he became pious, mild, gentle, cheerful, and resigned, nor did he think he could ever do too much to shew his affection and gratitude to M. de St. Claude.†

Scarcely was he established in his conversion, when he recovered his liberty, and an order came for his liberation; but such was his attachment to M. de St. Claude, that the Governor found it impossible to

* See note ‡, page 267. † Ibid.

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prevail upon him to quit his prison. Upon which the Governor was again obliged to have recourse to his pious captive, who represented to his convert, that the will of God being manifested by this order, he ought to comply with it; and that after having received the talent of grace in solitude, he ought, since God called him, to go and use it amongst his fellow men, to the glory of God who had given it to him.*

With great sorrow the prisoner yielded to these representations of M. de St. Claude, who consoled him a little by promising to correspond with him, and by recommending him to the care of his brother, M. the Abbe le Noir.†

Besides the Abbe le Noir, the Canon of Notre Dame, M. de St. Claude had another brother, M. le Noir du Roule,‡ who at the commencement of the last century, was deputed by Louis the Fourteenth, upon an

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* See note ‡, page 267. † Ibid.

‡ M. du Roule is mentioned very particularly in Bruce's Travels. Also in Father Lobo's account of Abyssinia.

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embassy to the Emperor of Ethiopia, and who was massacred on his journey by the King of Sennaar.*

At the accession of Louis the Fifteenth, M. de St. Claude, being liberated, in common with all those who were detained on religious grounds, went to reside at the house of his brother, the Abbe le Noir, who, as well as himself, had been strongly attached to Port Royal.†

After the death of his brother, M. de St. Claude resided many years in the College of Laon, with a pious and venerable old man, who had attended M. Arnauld in his latter years. This valuable friend he lost also; in addition to which, he had the misfortune of being totally deprived of sight. His eyes having been so much weakened by the dampness of his prison, that at the period of his liberation, though not much above forty years of age, he could only perceive the largest objects, and could scarcely

* Clem. x. p. 328.

† Clem. x. pp. 328, 329, 330, 331. Poulain iv. pp. 260, 261, 262. 254, 255.

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see sufficiently to walk about the streets in safety.*

In these circumstances, M. de St. Claude withdrew into retirement. The bias of his own mind had always led him to a secluded life, and he had now an ample opportunity of indulging it.†

Prayer, and listening to the perusal of the Scriptures, or works of piety, were his chief occupations; and, in order to render himself as useful as possible to his fellow men, he not only relieved the temporal necessities of the poor, but continually purchased pious books to distribute amongst them. But the enemy of the salvation of mankind, ever ready to stir up their evil passions, and to incite them to persecute the children of God, soon found means to interrupt this good work. The house of M. de St. Claude was visited by the police-officers, and not only all the books intended for the poor were carried off, (though printed with the royal privilege and approbation)

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* See note †, page 272. † Ibid.

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but a very considerable part of his own excellent and valuable library was seized.*

Thus was he deprived of the only outward resource left him; nevertheless, trying as these malicious persecutions were, it was the means of exemplifying the promise, that all things shall work together for good, to those who truly love God. His life became daily more hid in Christ, and an almost angelic spirituality seemed to beam in his countenance. He never appeared but to go to church; his regular attendance on which was never interrupted to the very last day of his life.†

This venerable elder was continually to be seen attending the catechising of children, with the humility and simplicity which formed his character. He always appeared cloathed as a simple mechanic. He bestowed all he had on the poor, and as he walked to church, he was always occupied in reciting the Psalms, all of which he knew by heart, as well as the New Testament. When at

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* See note †, page 272. † Ibid.

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church, he attracted the attention of the faithful by his deep and inward devotion, being penetrated alike with a sense of the greatness and majesty of God, and of his own nothingness.*

M. de St. Claude led in other respects a life of great austerity, always lying on a hard quilted straw mattress, and spending neither money nor time in superfluous amusements.†

Humility was the grand principle of M. de St. Claude's predilection for evangelical poverty. He denied himself in every thing to give to the poor. It was his maxim not to intrench upon his fortune, which he left entire to his relations; but in the mean time to expend his whole income without any reserve. He employed his wealth in good works, supporting the indigent, especially those who suffered for the truth; assisting the nuns both of Port Royal, and of

* See note †, page 272.

† Besogne, v. pp. 153, 154, 155. Poulain, iv. pp. 254, 255.

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some other convents of that neighbourhood, where God was served in spirit and in truth.*

M. de St. Claude distributed the greater part of his charities through the medium of an excellent and aged maiden lady of great piety, who informed herself in detail of the wants and necessities of worthy people. When he carried his alms to her, it was not a petty sum, but a purse of louis. His love of self-denial, and his charity towards the poor, taught him to retrench in the most necessary expenses, that, for example, of having a boy to lead him as he walked in the streets,† and to read to him at home after he became blind.‡

M. de St. Claude was a strictly self-denying Christian, yet, without the adoption of any extraordinary singularities; a frugal

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* See note †, page 275.

† It is to be remembered that the streets in Paris having no footways, are highly unsafe, comparatively with those of London.

‡ See note †, page 275.

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and abstemious style of living, fasts performed according to the ancient discipline of the church, and prayer at midnight in the church, were the whole of his ascetic practices.*

The privilege of prayer he availed himself of without ceasing. Public worship was delightful to him, nor did he ever miss it day or night. He had one fixed place at Port Royal, and at the church of St. Etienne du Mont, which he attended at Paris, standing against one of the pillars without support; and with his eyes closed chaunting with a loud voice. Many persons went to the church to observe him for their edification. The very sight of M. de St. Claude disposed the heart to prayer. The parishioners of St. Etienne du Mont still remember the lively example which he afforded them during the latter years of his life, while he resided in that parish.†

It was delightful to contemplate this truly venerable old man, with his long

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* See note †, page 275. † Ibid.

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white hazel staff, his thread-bare coat, and silver hair, placed behind the pulpit, during the whole service, and apparently immovably fixed against a pillar; unless when he quitted his place at the communion after mass; going into the choir, to receive it with the others. It often happened, that another parishioner, no less edifying, met with him at the holy table. We speak of the Duke of Orleans, first Prince of the blood, son of the Regent, who resided in a little hermitage at the Canons regular of St. Genevieve. It was a striking sight, to behold these two virtuous and pious individuals kneeling, side by side, at the altar. Both exhibited perfect models of piety, penitence, humility, and liberality, towards the poor, mingling indiscriminately with the other communicants, from whom they were only distinguished, the one by his white head, the other by his blue ribbon.*

* Louis, Duke of Orleans, son of the Regent, and first Prince of the blood, was born at Versailles,

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The public services which M. de St. Claude attended regularly, whether at Port

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August 4th, 1703. He was endowed with a fine understanding and acute discernment, with peculiar talents and taste for study and literature. His youth was dissipated; but after the death of his father, and that of his wife, he withdrew from the world; devoting himself wholly to exercises of devotion and works of charity, as well as to the study of theology and science.

In 1730, he took an apartment in the Abbey of St. Genevieve, which, in 1742, became his sole residence. He never quitted it but to attend the council at the Palais Royal, or to pay charitable or devotional visits to hospitals or churches.

Portioning young women, affording means of education to children, and of learning a trade to youths; founding colleges, bestowing benefactions on missionary societies, or forming new establishments, were the objects which employed this excellent and learned prince to the close of his life. He died on the 4th of February, 1752, aged forty-eight years and a half.

The queen, on hearing this mournful intelligence, said, "c'est un bienheureux qui laisse apres lui bien des malheureux." The Duke of Orleans cultivated every species of information; he had acquired the Hebrew, Chaldean, Syriac, and Greek languages; he was thoroughly versed in sacred, ecclesiastical, and profane history; he was an excellent natural historian, and perfectly understood geography, botany, medicine, and painting.

A great

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Royal or elsewhere, formed but the smallest portion of his life of prayer; he knew the

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A great number of his works are remaining in manuscript, according to the information we derive from the Abbe L'Advocat, who enumerates the following:

I. Literal translations of paraphrases and commentaries on part of the Old Testament.

II. A literal translation of the Psalms, from the original Hebrew, with a paraphrase and notes. This work is one of the most complete amongst those of this pious and learned Prince. He was still engaged in it during the illness which terminated his existence; and he finished it a very short time previous to his death. It contains many learned and ingenious explications, with sound and precise criticism, and a great number of very curious and learned dissertations.

III. Several dissertations against the Jews, intended to be a refutation of the famous Hebrew work, the Shield of Faith. The Duke not being satisfied with the refutation of this book by Gousset, undertook the task himself, but did not live to complete it. It is very superior to that of Gousset, as far as it has gone, and is a much better answer to the difficulties started by the Jews, which he has examined and sifted thoroughly, and replied to in the most masterly manner.

IV. A

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Psalter by heart, and used it in prayer continually. When he was seen walking in the streets, and his blindness led him to think himself unobserved, his lips were constantly moving, as he repeated the Psalms, or prayed to himself.*

The officer, who was Governor of the Bastille during the nine years this servant of God was confined there, declared, that whatever gratification he derived from the conversation of this prisoner, he refrained from visiting him as often as he could have

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IV. A literal translation from St. Paul's Epistles, from the Greek, with a paraphrase, critical notes, and pious reflections.

V. A treatise against theatrical amusements.

VI. A solid refutation of the great French work, the Hexaples.

VII. Several very curious treatises and dissertations on different subjects.—His great modesty would never permit him to be prevailed on to print any of his works.

Voyez son article, Dictionnaire Historique.

Also see note †, page 275.

* Besogne, v. pp. 155, 156, 157, 160. Clem. x. pp. 3 3,333,334. Poulain, iv. pp. 262, 263, 264, 265.

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wished, because he had observed that every time he went to his chamber, he was the cause of his retrenching from the time devoted to rest on the following night; as the whole time consumed in conversation with the Governor, was taken out of some religious duty the prisoner had to perform at that time; and as he would not omit them, he encroached upon the night, to perform the service he had prescribed to himself in the day: so deep was that piety, and so exalted that Christianity which found time too short even in a prison for the performance of charity and devotion.*

It appears that, beside the practice of repeating the Psalms and vocal prayer, he also spent a great portion of his time in mental prayer. This was particularly visible in old age, after he had lost his sight, and was no longer able to read. In this state he continued many years, during which he remained in his chamber, without company; he seldom

* See note *, page 291.

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went out but to attend different churches, for he made very few visits; and when he had finished his stations, he returned to his beloved solitude. There he was never perceived to be wearied a single moment, as he declared, with his usual simplicity and frankness.*

If any persons paid him a visit, which did not often occur, he always addressed them cheerfully and openly, without any of that air of sadness or melancholy, usually seen in persons of unoccupied minds, and listless habits; and it fully appeared in his conversation, that he spoke of the things of God from the very fulness of his heart; and the fruits of his solitary meditation and prayer, proved an abundant harvest of blessings, to the friends who visited him in his seclusion.†

But, perhaps, M. de St. Claude's most distinguishing characteristic was, his extraordinary Christian charity, and spirit of peace and love. Every division amongst the friends of truth, pierced him to the very heart.‡

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* See note *, page 281. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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M. de St. Claude died the death of the righteous, on the 29th of December, 1742, at five o'clock in the morning. As soon as the report of his death was circulated, the concourse of people who flocked to his chamber, to behold him once more, was so great, and so continual, that it was found necessary to close the door of the house before they could proceed with the necessary preparations for his interment.*

We have now presented the reader with a faithful and circumstantial narrative of the destruction of PORT ROYAL, and of the end of its pious inhabitants; saints, of whom the world was not worthy, and who may so emphatically be said to have walked with God in the world, to have endured as seeing him who is invisible, to have had the testimony that they pleased God, and to have died in the faith.†

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* See note *, page 281.

† Mademoiselle Poulain terminates her valuable work in the following words: "On ne peut mieux terminer ces vies édifiantes qu'en rapportant les propres paroles de M. Colbert, évêque de Montpellier, sur Mes-

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Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. Such were the grievous hardships so long, and so patiently endured by the innocent inhabitants of Port Royal des Champs; those good and faithful servants of the most high God, so unjustly persecuted by men ambitious of court favor. Painful is the consideration, that it was

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sieurs de Port Royal, "Qui a rendu des services plus essentielles à l'église et à l'état que ces hommes célébres qu'on a voulu faire passer pour les ennemis de l'un et de l'autre? Les ouvrages qu'ils ont laissé, et dans lesquels ils ont excellé en tout genre, ont servi à donner à la France cette supériorité qui l'éleve au dessus des autres nations. Si le peuple est plus instruit, la religion plus connue, le clergé plus savant; à qui en a-t-on la première et la principale obligation, si ce n'est aux travaux immenses de cette pépinière d'hommes que Dieu avoit fait naître pour purifier le temple et le sanctuaire, et pour faire réfleurir Israel? Que l'on examine dans tous ces corps séculiers et réguliers qui se distinguent par une piété plus solide et plus mâle, qui sont plus versés dans les divines écritures, et l'on verra que ce sont ceux à qui les ouvrages de Port Royal sont tombés entre les mains, ou qui ont eu le bonheur d' être conduits par des maitres qui étoient remplis de son esprit."

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chiefly men devoted to the altar, as especial and living sacrifices acceptable to God, who thus awfully lied to the Holy Ghost, using the sacred plea of religion falsely, and taking the name of God in vain, as a means to their own aggrandizement.

Such, in every age, and in every nation, have been the unhappy consequences of the spirit of persecution and intolerance, created by every system of human policy, whose fabricators have been unmindful of our Saviour's important declaration, "my kingdom is not of this world."

The church of Christ may well mourn, when the lures of temporal interests and honors, render those who should be her spiritual guardians, venal instruments of corruption, wielded by the secular power, for temporal objects and political ends.

Of the truth and importance of this remark, and of the solemn divine declaration on which it is founded, both Protestant and Catholic Europe presented an awful example during the period which this little work embraces.

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Whilst Scotland beheld the excellent of the earth dragged by the dominant Episcopacy in her sister isle, like unoffending sheep to the slaughter; and whilst the Presbyterians of America were leading to an ignominious execution, the peaceful members of that excellent and honorable society, which has presented to the admiring world the unprecedented, and the unemulated example, of a legislature without war; the dominant party of the Calvinists in Holland, was triumphing in the persecution of the Arminians; and in England, not only the long reign of Elizabeth, but those of her successors, the ill-fated Stuarts, were crimsoned by the accumulated butcheries of multitudes of venerable Catholic priests, who for conscience sake alone, were dragged to slaughter, and put to death, with circumstances of lingering torture and protracted cruelty, whose very relation, makes abhorrent nature shudder.*

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* We refer the reader to Dodd's Church History, and to the Memoirs of Missionary Priests. From the latter

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Nor was the spirit of persecution confined alone to the Protestant world. The same unnatural conjunction of temporal and eternal interests, which God himself has solemnly declared to be absolutely incompatible, raised up against the saints of France, ruthless persecutors in the bosom of that very religion, whose profession of faith and holy precepts had formed the hearts and evangelical lives of the Pascals, the Fenelons, the Thomas a Kempis, the Sales, the Guyons, the Renty's, and the Vincent de Pauls.

We cannot conclude this little work, in a more satisfactory manner, than by pursuing the same strain of sentiment with

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of these works, which is now before us, it appears, that between the years 1500 and 1600, one hundred and forty-three Catholic priests suffered death, mostly with torture, on account of their religion; one hundred and ninety-nine persons endured torture, or died in prison on that account; and between 1600 and 1680, there were one hundred and sixty-one persons suffered death or torture, on the same account; making in all, from 1577 to 1681, the number of five hundred and three persons.

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which Dom Clemencet terminates the account of the servants of Port Royal; extracts from which occupy so many of the preceding pages.

He continues by adopting the enquiry of St. Paul.

"And now what more shall we say? for the time would fail us to tell of all the multitudes, who through faith, wrought righteousness, and inherited the promises," whether in the seclusion of Port Royal itself, or in connexion with that blessed institution. It would, however, be superfluous to enter into any further detail. Christian biography should both be written and read with a view to promote edification, not to stimulate curiosity. The examples of every description which have been already proposed, are amply sufficient for those who are sincerely desirous to profit by them, and who are anxious rather to reproduce their virtues in their lives, than to imprint them in their memories.

Reader, whatever be thy condition, or thy talents, thou mayest here find a

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model. The valley of Port Royal presents examples, from the cottage to the throne; and thou wilt behold in this seclusion, Saints, at whose feet thou mayest think it an honor to sit; from amongst the unlettered peasants, whose graces bloomed in her hidden retirements; to her pious and enlightened professors, whose talents and whose learning dazzled and astonished Europe.

Permit me then, whoever thou mayest be, to conclude, by earnestly and affectionately addressing myself to thee in particular. Let me then beseech thee, in the language of St. Paul; who, after speaking of the fathers, the patriarchs, and the prophets, who walked as seeing him who is invisible and who died in faith, emphatically adds, "since then *we* also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let *us* too lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience, the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy

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that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

May we contemplate these eminent examples of Christian excellence, not with an idle and fruitless curiosity; but, as St. Austin listened to the wonders related by Pontinian, with a reverend and holy admiration!

Yet let us not imagine it to be sufficient to experience a warm admiration and reverence, in contemplating the miracles which divine grace has wrought, and wrought even almost in our own days. If the bright light of Port Royal has thus shone before our eyes, it is incumbent on us, who see its good works, to learn of the same spirit to glorify our Father which is in heaven.

For Christ is the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The spirit of grace is given to every man to profit withal, the love of our heavenly Father extends the same Scriptures, the same grace, and the same promises, which pardoned, renewed, and sanctified their souls, to ours

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equally. Let us not then content ourselves with merely beholding the brightness of their lives; but by the salutary light it diffuses, let us search out the irregularity and imperfection of our own.

Whilst then we venerate the piety of Port Royal, let us seek of our and their God, to partake in the same spirit, remembering it can only be done by a participation in their faith; faith in him who is the only foundation, the sole author and finisher of scriptural Christian faith; JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the only name given under heaven whereby men can be saved; and the lips of inspiration have solemnly declared, *neither is there salvation in any other.*

And, if we believe we have that faith, let us examine ourselves, whether we be *indeed* in the faith; for the hope of the hypocrite shall perish. A scriptural faith must not only embrace the true object, but it must be implanted by the right spirit, for no man can efficaciously call Christ, Lord, but by the teaching of the Holy

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Spirit; nor will any conviction of the understanding avail, unless the heart likewise believes unto righteousness. He alone is in the faith, who lives by faith, and whose faith is continually operative in works of Christian love.

Let us, then, not be merely admirers of the lives, but partakers in the faith which produced such an abundance of excellent fruits in the blessed inhabitants of Port Royal.

To what purpose is it to honor the saints of God with our lips, whilst we deny that faith by which they became so, by the course of our whole lives? What will it avail, merely to venerate the memory of Port Royal, to speak with reverence of its departed saints, to visit its desolate scite, or to shed tears over its demolished foundations and its silent ruins?

So likewise do the children of this world, honor the relics of that departed piety, which no longer opposes their corruptions. They adorn and beautify the sepulchres of those prophets when dead, whom living,

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they might have been the first to persecute even unto the death.

Let us do far differently. Let us indeed venerate the memory of the excellent of the earth. Of those who have in any degree borne the image of Christ, and become living temples of his holy spirit. But let us not only have the history of Port Royal painted in our memory, and its praises published by our tongues; but may its sentiments and its faith be engraven within our very hearts, and its good works be reproduced day by day in our lives.

Let us praise them by an adoption of their spirit, and a conformity to their conduct.

And woe be to us if we follow them not!

Every Christian exhortation, every example of the power of divine grace, is an especial messenger of God to our own souls, inviting us likewise to be partakers of the same mercies. Accordingly, as we receive or reject, it must become the savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. It sets before us life and death, the blessing and the curse. For this is the condemna-

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tion, that light is come into the world; but that men, though having seen the light, yet preferred darkness rather than light.

My fellow Christian Reader, do not let us deceive ourselves. We cannot trifle with our call of grace with impunity: God is not mocked. Nor is it possible to rise from the contemplation of the divine mercies, in the same state in which we sat down to their consideration. We have received one more invitation to turn to God, and He will not hold us guiltless, if we have not merely taken his name, but even beheld his grace in vain.

Let us be fully assured, that for every good example the mercy of God vouchsafes us in the day of grace, his justice will require fruits in the day of judgment; and that every eulogium we have bestowed on virtue without following it, will only prove an additional seal to the awfulness of our irrevocable condemnation.

However vivid may have been our sentiments of admiration for his servants, or however we may have inculcated their ex-

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amples amongst men, yet, if we stop there, we shall be found amongst those to whom the Lord will say, as to those who prophesied in his name without following him, "Depart from me, all ye that work iniquity, I never knew you!"

Let us, then, not delay to seek the rock of ages, and that with our whole heart. And let us seek him now, while it is yet called to day; for now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.

Reader, the examples of eminent piety these pages propose to thy imitation, are not those of a remote age, and severed from our own by a wide dissimilarity of customs, habits, civilization, or mental cultivation.

The excellent persons whose virtues this brief memento records, belong to an age linked on to our own, not merely by proximity of time; but which in intellectual illumination, in the elegant arts, and in the depth of mental research, as well as in polished society, refinement of manners, and luxurious delicacy of habits, was precisely equal, if not perhaps superior to our own.

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The seventeenth, and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, are perhaps alone distinguished from the period which has succeeded, by the super-eminent growth and strength of sanctity, united with splendour of talent, which rendered conspicuous so bright and numerous a constellation of its illustrious characters.

Let us not then shield ourselves with vain excuses; which, however they may delude our own consciences, will never stand before the touch-stone of the sanctuary, or the tribunal of the final judge.

Reader, there is but one road to the kingdom of God. That Royal road, which the prophets and the patriarchs have trodden before thee. The walk of faith, the highway of holiness, in which even the fool shall not err, who walks by faith and not by sight. The door of entrance is Christ. Nor can any man enter that door without repentance; for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Agonize then, and strive to enter the

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strait gate; for many shall *seek* to enter in, and shall not be able; for the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Cast off then every hindrance. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent, and believe the Gospel.

Reader, whosoever thou mayest be, however amiable thy character before men, and comparatively of good report; canst thou require a repentance less deep, or a conversion less thorough; or canst thou less need an Almighty Saviour to redeem thy lost soul, than the Arnaulds, the Sacis, the Lindos, the Fontaines; who, as far as it regarded the external observance of the law, walked even from their very earliest youth upwards, in all the commandments of the Lord blameless?

Like Job, they were perfect and upright; they feared God and eschewed evil. Yet, like him, their hearts were no sooner illuminated by the Spirit of God, than, with him, they abhorred themselves, and repented in dust and ashes; and the sole ground of rejoicing of these saints of our

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latter times, like that of the venerable patriarch who dwelt in the land of Uz anterior to the days of Moses, was, not in any good works they had done, but, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." For the faith of the church, like Christ who is its object, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Or if by the grace of God, thou hast already experienced Christ's redeeming love; art thou more exempted from the command to keep stedfast, immovable, and always abounding in the works of the Lord, than the Remicourts, the Courtiaux, the du Valois, or the St. Claudes?

Or is the impenetrable shield of faith, which quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one, which overcomes the world, removes mountains, purifies the heart, and works by love, less necessary to thee, than to the eminent sanctity of the Marie Angelique Arnaulds, the Ninvilliers, the St. Thécle Racines, the du Fargis, and the Suireau des Anges?

If thou art indeed a branch engrafted into the true vine, dost thou imagine there is a

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dispensation allowing thee to be less abundant in good works, than the Issalis, the Bagnols, the Aumonts, and the Sericourts?

Nor think to plead the particularities of thy individual character or situation, the solicitations of thy early besetting sin and habitual infirmity, or the difficulties and temptations of thy peculiar circumstances, as affording any ground of exemption. The voice of inspiration has expressly declared, that, with every temptation, he will make a means to escape; and the examples now before thee, are a few amongst the clouds of witnesses, exhibiting how God in his providence, has abundantly fulfilled his word.

Examine then thy own conscience. Is thy situation elevated amongst thy fellow-mortals? Is thy seat amongst the rulers of thy people? Do the aged arise and stand before thee, and the Princes refrain talking, and lay their hands on their mouth in thy presence? Does the brightness of thy name shine as a star in the firmament, and gild as with a lengthened train of lustre,

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even the dark and distant horizon of departed centuries?

And is this the ground on which thou alledgest the bondage of thy situation; the multifarious distractions of complicated cares, and of interfering duties; the restraining shackles of society, and the irksome but obligatory servitude of external representation?

Interrogate thyself. Are thy ties more strict, or is external representation more incumbent upon thee, than upon the amiable and accomplished, as well as humble and pious Duchesses of Luynes and Liancourt, and the Princesses of Guimenée and Elbœuf? Is it more difficult to preserve humility, recollection, devotion, and self-denial, in the splendour of thy birth; than amidst the united blaze of talent, wit, beauty, and affluence, which illustrated the royalty of that of the Longuevilles and the Contis; and which were enlisted under the banner of the cross, on the throne of the Gonzagas?

Perhaps, however, thou advancest the

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opposite plea, and importunately urgest the lowliness of thy fortunes. Thy lot is cast in the deep and dark valleys, or in the pit where no water is. Like thy master, thou hast not even where to lay thy head. Thy name is unknown amongst men; thou art forgotten amongst thy people, thou art passed over, and as one dead, and out of mind amongst thy brethren; and thy name has not extended to the saints, who, if they knew, might cheer thee. Thy path is desolate and uncheered. When affliction comes upon thee as a flood, pressing down thy heart to the dust, no man cares for thy soul. When corroding sorrow eats like a canker into thy vitals, and sears with concentrated grief thy aching heart; no prophet of God is near to touch the rock, and bid the kindly waters flow. When strong temptations spread their nets, encompassing thee round on every side, when the pressure of dire necessity goads thee on, and the iron grasp of gaunt poverty drags thee reluctant to the abhorred toils; no Christian brother is near, to burst, in the

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name of Christ, the bond, to bid the prisoner be free, and lead thee to that God who can alone restore the fallen soul. The weary path of thy human pilgrimage is dark, and drear, and cheerless; and every slow and heavy laden step, thou must trace helpless and alone.

Yet not alone, for God is with thee! He was with our great Exemplar; and through his merits, he will likewise dwell with all his faithful disciples. Was he not with the Laisnés, the de la Croix, the Fais, the Fourniers, the Epargneurs, the Noiseux? They were redeemed, they were sanctified, in a state of holy poverty; they stood unmoved amidst persecution, they fought the good fight, they kept the faith; and whilst they receive the crown of victory in heaven, their bright examples are left as an inheritance to the saints of succeeding centuries; after having edified their vicinity, and converted multitudes from the error of their ways, to serve the living God.

But, perhaps, thy temptations are far different.

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Thou art ranked amongst the number of the learned. It is the intensity of metaphysical or philosophical research, or the elegant entertainments of literary leisure, that exclusively occupy thee; and with a vain shew of wisdom, beguile thee of life eternal.

Or in the dreams of an author's exuberant fancy, thou wastest, with aching head, the midnight lamp; thy goaded pen toils for the vain hope of instructing generations yet unborn, and the deceitful phantom of posthumous fame, allures thee by the besetting foolishness of those who profess to be wise.

But dost thou imagine these vain excuses will avail with him, who has only given thee talents for his use; and who has expressly assured thee, he will not fail to require his own at thy hands with usury?

Are thy researches more abstruse, or are thy studies more laborious and intense, or do they require more exclusive application of mind, than the Pascals. Pascal, the severity of whose studies, chased away the

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perception of one of the most acute bodily pains, but could never make him forget the presence of God. 'Is thy learning more profound, more extensive, or more various, than the Tillemonts, the Arnaulds, the Barcos, the St. Cyrans, the Lancelots? Are thy literary pursuits more important, or more abundant, than the Quesnels, the Sacis, the Singlins, the Hamons, the Nicoles, the Mesenguys, the St. Marthes, from whose luminous and evangelical pages, successive generations of philosophers and saints, delight alike to recreate the mind, and to drink the pure waters of celestial wisdom, expanding the intellect, and converting the soul?

Or is the polish of thy taste more exquisite, or the riches of thy imagination more luxuriant? Is thy genius more elevated, or is the reward which fame extends to thy acceptance, more brilliant than that of the Racines,* whose monumental tablet, pre-

* Surely England is not amongst the least rich of nations in her bright constellation of Christian poets.

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sented to the countless multitudes of literary and titled mourners, that from various nations fondly visited his consecrated grave, the following striking inscription:

"He, whose genius has been the theme of applause and admiration to contending courts and nations, requests that which can *alone* avail him—YOUR PRAYERS."

Possibly, however, thou mayest complain of the opposite hindrance, and lament that thy lot has fallen amongst the simple and unlettered, and that thou art debarred from the consolation of refreshing thy heart by a wide acquaintance with the written experi-

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Nor do we, perhaps, sufficiently estimate the obligations we owe to those writers, who, enlisting their genius under the banners of the cross, kindle the heart and imagination of their readers with none but hallowed fire. Happy they who, like the authors of the PARADISE LOST, the TASK, the NIGHT THOUGHTS, and RODERIC THE GOTH, receive not only the loud applauses of the beuxesprits, but the deep and heartfelt blessing of the Christian; and whose brows grateful posterity encircles with the double crown of classic bays, and of immortal amaranth.

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ences of those saints, who are already gone to their reward; or from the advantage of having thy doubts and difficulties solved, by the labors of men of piety and learning.

Reader, if this be thy difficulty, be of good cheer. The word of truth expressly declares, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and the page of almost contemporary biography, abundantly exemplifies that it is so. Art thou less informed than the Bourchiers, the Moliacs, and the Compagnons? Is the page of the Word of God less open to thee, than it was to them; and is that page less able than in the days of the apostle, to make thee truly wise unto salvation?

Nor let me conclude without addressing a word more particularly to those of the female sex.

In a civilized period of society, as the division of labor becomes progressively multiplied amongst men, so the varieties of character and pursuit, become more diversified, and more distinctly marked amongst women. And in the nineteenth century,

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our own sex presents, not only the important character of the Mère de Famille, but likewise the honorable and useful occupations of conductors of public charities, of ingenious authors, and of elegant artists.

Precisely these diversities do the examples of Port Royal exhibit,—may they produce a beneficial influence on my own countrywomen!

May those who are placed at the heads of families, prove the blessed instruments of their conversion, after the examples of Madame le Maitre, Du Fosse, and Des Anges!

May those who are widows, be, as St. Paul expresses it, "widows indeed," uniting a primitive piety, and disengagement from the world, with hospitality to the saints; using their means in the service of truth, like Madame D'Aumont, Madame Marion Arnauld, and Madame D'Espinoy des Anges!

May those who unite a wide influence with wealth, examine whether they use it like the Longuevilles, the Luynes, the Ver-

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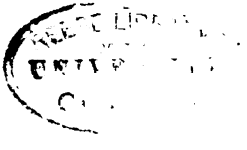
tus, and the Liancourts; and those amongst my own country-women, who are called by their talents to an active sphere, emulate the bright examples of the Joncoux, the St. Christine Briquets, and the St. Eustoquie Bregy's, uniting Martha's busy hand with Mary's loving heart.

And last, but not least, let me address myself to those, whose abilities or inclinations lead them to dedicate the labors of their pen to the amusement or instruction of the public.

The vocation of an author is a serious one,—serious as it respects the writer, and as it respects the reader; that to which utterance has once been given, it is beyond the writer's power to recall; so that, in another sense, it may be truly said of literary crimes, as of the sin of Esau, that no place for repentance is to be found, though it be sought carefully, and with tears.

The successful candidates for literary celebrity have a voice, which shall yet be heard when their place on earth shall know them no more; and which, like that of



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Abel, though they were dead, should yet speak.

Yea, and of every idle word which it *doth* speak, shall they give an account; nor can the united applauses of all men, avail to screen them from the righteous judgment of God.

May they then enter into the retirement of their own closets, beseeching the Lord, our present Saviour, and our final judge, to try the very ground and intention of their hearts! and may my own accomplished and ingenious country-women, like the Agnés, and Angelique Arnaulds, and the Angelique de St. Jeans, compose only those works, which shall diffuse wide good around; leaving a lasting blessing behind, that shall endure on earth, whilst the redeemed spirit of their authors, shall be reaping its rich reward in heaven!

And now, O Lord, do thou in mercy engrave these truths, alike on the heart of the writer, as of the reader of these pages. May the time bestowed upon them not have been in vain to either! Whilst they honor

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the remembrance of thy Saints of Port Royal, may they look with renewed confidence to thee, the alone giver of all their excellent gifts; and seeking a lively participation in the same faith, may all their future labor, both of body and mind, be truly hallowed unto thee; and may both one day rest with these thy saints, in thy holy presence; finding through the merits of their common Redeemer, a blessed entrance through grace, into that kingdom, which has truth for its Lord, love for its law-giver, holiness for its fruition, and eternity for its duration! Amen.

Bristol, October 10*th*, 1815.

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ACCOUNT

OF

A VISIT TO THE RUINS

OF

PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS,

BEING AN EXTRACT FROM MY JOURNAL TO THE CONTINENT OF THE 18TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1814.

WITH

NOTES DESCRIBING ITS ORIGINAL STATE,

COMPILED FROM

"LA DESCRIPTION DES BATIMENTS DE PORT ROYAL," GIVEN IN RACINE, HIST. ECCLES. BESOGNE, AND CLEMENCET, COMPARED WITH THE PLANS AND FIFTEEN VIEWS BY MADEMOISELLE HORTHEMELS.

* * * * * * NEXT morning we set out from our uncomfortable inn at Versailles, to make our long projected visit to the remains of PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS, which is only about six miles further.

We soon quitted the high road, which, bordered with a magnificent avenue of trees, extends twelve miles, entering Paris through the Bois de Boulogne, the Barriere de Neuilly, the Champs Elisées, and the place Louis Quinze, till the noble vista is terminated by the magnificent gardens and the Royal Castle of the Thuilleries.

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The cross road into which we turned, leads through the valley of Port Royal, and close under the walls of the monastery to Chêvreuse. The way, which is exceedingly rough and ill kept, rapidly ascends to a sort of flat or wold, such as those on the tabled hills of Somersetshire. Though by no means unsafe, we could proceed but slowly; and there being no avenue on each side, as on the high roads, its appearance was very dreary. Indeed, excepting where the country is well wooded, like that near Pont St. Maxence, I think every part of the North of France I have seen, has a very desolate appearance, owing to the total want of hedge-rows. Both in French Flanders and Picardy, the view extends over immense tracts of country, where neither cattle nor human habitation is to be seen; and which, from its being uninclosed, appears totally naked, though in fact it is every where covered with abundant crops.

This high ground and bare appearance continued nearly the whole way. We passed indeed two or three villages situated in hollows. They were surrounded by vineyards, which were the first we had seen. They have very much the same appearance as the hop grounds in Kent. On inquiry, we found these villages to be Voisins, Liancourt, and others often mentioned in the Port Royal writers.

At length, the tabled plain over which our road had generally extended, seemed suddenly to terminate just before us, as though we were arriving at the brow of a precipice extending across the whole plain. About a

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hundred yards to our right was a large old-fashioned farm-house, which the coachman informed us was LES GRANGES, the former abode of the recluses. He advised us to drive there first for directions, as the descent into the valley of Port Royal was exceedingly steep; and that he was unacquainted with the roads, one of which was very unsafe, owing to the precipitous descent.

Accordingly, we turned into the cart-track which led to the house, and which was bounded by a high garden-wall, till we came to a lofty archway, which having passed through, we found ourselves in the farm-yard of the celebrated LES GRANGES, the abode of the LE MAITRES, the FONTAINES, the ARNAULDS, &c.

Here were the farmer and all his men at work, and the mistress busy feeding her poultry. In a moment our carriage was surrounded by master, mistress, men, maids, dogs, pigs, hens, and turkeys, who all seemed equally amazed at the sight of a carriage in so remote a place.

They however told us, with that amenity which we found characterize the Dutch, the Flemish, and the French, that we were perfectly welcome to see the whole house; that they would then conduct us by the foot-way down the steep, to see the remains of PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS; and that if we liked to take a farm-house dinner, they would with the greatest pleasure get us whatever their house afforded.

I must now introduce you to LES GRANGES. More than half of the original building, we were told, is demolished; but what is left, has yet the appearance of a

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very large and old-fashioned farm-house, built of rough stone, and much like those I have seen in the neighbourhood of Shepton Mallet in Somersetshire.

The entrance to the house is from the farm-yard. A considerable part of the lower floor was formerly appropriated to the refectory of the recluses, but as it is now partitioned into several rooms, I could not judge of its size.

We then went up a staircase which is of brick or stone, to visit the chambers of the recluses: they are all floored with the small hexagonal tiles, which are so common in France and Flanders. We first met with them in the bed-room of Jansenius, at Louvain; and then, at almost every inn, from the Hotel de Hollande at Cambray, to Paris, and from thence on our road to Calais, as far as Amiens.

These brick-floors give the bed-rooms a most forlorn appearance; and to an English traveller, form a strange contrast with the beds, the curtains and coverlets of which were frequently of silk or satin.

The physician Hamon's room was one of the first we saw. It was small, and must have been inconvenient. The furnace, oven, mortar, and various other utensils for preparing medicines for the poor, still remained. Through this room was a little light closet, in which he used to sleep on a board, instead of a mattress. The staples which held his bookcase yet remain, as well as the alarum by which he called himself to midnight prayer.

From this room we went to those of Arnauld, which

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are rather large, and open into each other. From the windows, which, like all the others in the house, were only the size of casements, the prospect is delightful, extending over the whole fertile valley below, to the wooded hills beyond, and including the spires of the little churches of Vaumurier and St. Lambert. Here we saw the stone table on which M. d'Andilli wrote many of the lives of the Saints; and here our kind hostess, Madame Methouard, pointed out, with much regret, the devastations of the Cossacks, who had pilfered a set of prints of Don Quixote, with which she had replaced the ecclesiastical library of Arnauld.

We then visited several of the other cells; after which, leaving our baggage in M. le Maitre's room, where we were to dine, we set out under the auspices of Madame Methouard, by the short path-way down the steep, to the Monastery; leaving our carriage, and our valet de place, Camino, to meet us near the church-yard of St. Lambert; and only taking with us our English servant, to carry a basket and knife, which had already served us at Brederode, Louvain, Cambray, and Antwerp, to procure "*des reliques bien avérées.*"

Our way lay through the farm-yard, where a door opened upon a space, which extended under the wall, along the brow of the hill. Here we distinctly perceived there had been a terrace, where the recluses walked to meditate. On the outside, the slope towards the brow of the hill was planted at intervals with fruit-trees, and was formerly their orchard.

On reaching the verge of the steep descent, we, for

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the first time, beheld Port Royal. Imagine the hill forming a complete steep or precipice, extending in an amphitheatrical form, and shagged with forest trees, chiefly beech, horse and Spanish chesnut, lime and ash; and in the bottom, a beautiful level plain, watered by a brook, and terminated by an opposing range of wooded hills; in the midst, and almost directly under our feet, covered with a profusion of creepers and wild flowers, are the silent remains of the Monastery of PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS.*

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* The site of the Abbey of Port Royal occupies a meadow, which forms the whole bottom of a narrow valley, surrounded completely on three sides, and partly on the fourth, by steep wooded hills. The rest opens into a cheerful and cultivated country, interspersed in the middle distance by fields, vineyards, groves, hills, and villages. From this opening to the East, a brook, about eighteen feet wide, enters the valley, and after crossing the south of it at the bottom of the monastic garden, it forms a large mill-pond, or lake, the dyke of which, thickly planted with forest trees, bounds the monastic wall of enclosure on the west side. Close by the lake are the mill, dove-cote, shepherd's cot, and other appendages of a like nature.

The terrace by this lake furnished Racine with the subject of his earliest poetical attempt. He describes the reflection of the dark forest trees in the water, and the singular appearance of the fish, apparently swimming amongst the branches. *See Mem. de Jean Racine, tom.* 1. *pp.* 24, 25, 26, *edit. Lausanne,* 1747.

The monastic enclosure itself, forms a long square, or parallelogram, occupying the whole of the valley, excepting the space taken up by the lake. It is surrounded by a wall, with small towers placed at intervals, so as to command each other.

The

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The view, without presenting any particular feature of magnificence, is yet one of the most completely beautiful it is possible to conceive. I could scarcely imagine, whilst contemplating it, that the view I was looking at was the same place which Madame de Se-

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The whole space enclosed, occupied, we were told, about twenty-seven acres.

The enclosure is divided into two parts, the whole north divisions of which were occupied by the buildings, burying grounds, courts, and private gardens, belonging to the various edifices of the monastery, and the south division of which was appropriated to the grand garden and walks belonging to the abbey.

Each of these great divisions may be further subdivided. Taking the church as the central point of the buildings, the space extending in front of it to the north monastic wall, was appropriated to the outer courts of the monastery. The burying ground for friends, servants, or those not properly of the order; also the houses of reception for guests, and the gardens belonging to these houses. To the west of the church was the hotel Longueville, to the east the stables, granaries, poultry yard, gardener's establishment, &c. Behind the church, and between it and the gardens of the monastery, was the inner enclosure properly belonging to the nuns. Here were the cloisters, dormitories, inner burying ground, infirmary, schools, obediences, &c. &c. By this arrangement, the buildings appropriated to the nuns in no place approached the grand wall of enclosure, but were bounded on all sides by other parts of the establishment.

The garden of the monastery was likewise divided by a wall, traversing it from east to west. The part next the abbey was properly a kitchen-garden, full of beds of vegetables and of fruit-trees. The farther part, called the solitude, or wilderness, was planted with high forest trees, and served as a walk for the nuns.

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vigné describes as "*Un désert affreux et tout propre à inspirer le désir de faire son salut.*" Its character, on the contrary, is singularly that of cheerfulness and elegance, though with the most perfect stilness and seclusion. Perhaps it may be, in some degree, altered from this circumstance, that formerly all the circumjacent hills were shagged with lofty forests, which would both increase their apparent altitude and darkness of colouring; whereas now, though beautifully wooded, there is a sufficiently great proportion of coppice, to give the forest trees room to expand in a broad shade, instead of forcing them to tower into tall timber trees.

At present, the style of prospect is precisely similar in character, to the valleys between the wooded hills of Sunny Side, and Colebrook Dale, in Shropshire. Each place has been made remarkable for two societies of eminently pious and beneficent inhabitants, and both are distinguished by the same class of beautiful scenery; only Port Royal possesses the additional beauty of an exquisite luxuriance of vegetation, of a freshness of verdure, and of a gay variety and profusion of wild flowers, which would be vainly sought for under the capricious vicissitudes of an English climate.

Having endeavoured to give a general sketch of the site of Port Royal, I must observe, that the monastery itself, is so completely destroyed, that at the distance at which we stood, the ruins of its foundations, especially as they are grown over with shrubs and field-flowers, are scarcely perceptible, except as roughening the ver-

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dant plain. Some parts, however, which were spared, instantly strike the eye. Just below us, at the foot of the hill, was the road winding between it and the boundary wall to the grand gothic entrance gate, which still remains entire. Close by it, to the right, is the house of the venerable M. De Saint Marthe now converted into a barn. Here, also, is the little cottage of St. Theobald, who, five centuries ago, lived as a hermit in this valley: it serves, at present, as a shepherd's cot.

On the left, the road remains flanked with eight towers, built during the civil wars. Near them appears another grand gateway, which formerly led to the Hotel of the Duchesse of Longueville. The terrace of her garden still remains elevated above the level of the valley, commanding a view over all the gardens of the monastery. The dove-cote too yet remains, the mill also and the house of the miller, formerly the habitation of the pious Peter Bourchier, and the solid stone-work, constructed by the recluses, to draw the waters from the meadow, and render the naturally marshy valley healthy. Beyond, is the level, uninterrupted verdant plain, that formerly was the garden of the nuns; and still farther, the beautiful brook which divides the valley. In front of the place where we stood, and just at the foot of the opposing wooded hill, is a sort of amphitheatre hollowed out; it is carpeted with turf, and formed with rude stone-work, like a grotto: it is overshadowed by the wide umbrage of the forest trees around,

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and above; and the remains of long stone seats, shew the place where the nuns of Port Royal used formerly to work together, and to hold their conference. This place was called the Desert; and many remaining pathways leading from it, and branching off in different directions, through the wooded side of the hill, still mark *la solitude*, where the nuns used to walk for the purposes of refreshment or meditation. All else is so completely ruined and demolished, that unless we had taken the plans and drawings, we could not possibly have distinguished the various parts of the buildings, although the foundations are to be traced with the greatest ease in every part.

The woods round Port Royal, are, on every side, most luxuriant, and serve as a retreat for a great abundance of game. Far to the left of the desert, and the range of wooded hills in which it is situated, the valley opens, as I have before described, into a most beautiful and rich country, gay with woods, vineyards, hills, and farm-houses, and tufted with groves; amongst which, arises the spire of the little church of St. Lambert, and by it, peeping through the trees, the house of Tillemont.

The road to Chevreuse here crosses the valley, winding between tall avenues of trees, in the most picturesque manner; and having, by a sudden turn to the left, quitted the wall of the monastery, it appears only in the middle distance, when the bright tints of the dresses of the country people passing to and fro, were

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just glimpsed between the tall stems of the trees; and animated, without in the least disturbing, the perfect stilness of the scene.

After contemplang the view for some time, we prepared to descend the hill, to take a nearer, and more detailed view of the ruins. Accordingly, we began cautiously to descend the steep, by a rude zig-zag path, or track, which is, however, so precipitous, that it is by no means easy to keep a firm footing, even by holding the boughs of the trees and shrubs through which it winds. As we were going down, Madame Methouard told me, that these woods were formerly reserved for the game of the Abbess of PORT ROYAL.

It is reported, that Henry the Fourth, being on a hunting excursion in this neighbourhood, some of the young nobility of his court, came one morning to make an idle visit at the monastery, when the little Abbesse M. ANGELIQUE, being then eleven years old, came down at the head of all her nuns, with her crosier in her hand, and turned them all out of the monastic precincts, at which the king was so delighted, that he came to the brow of the hill, saying, "*il faut que je baise les mains a Madame la petite Abbesse,*" which he accordingly did very respectfully.

On reaching the bottom of the hill, we found ourselves in the private road, formerly bordered by an avenue, which turns out of the Chevreuse road, and runs between the foot of the hill and the north monastery wall to the Abbey door. This is a noble gothic gateway, of the style of the thirteenth century. On the

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right was a door for foot-passengers. In front is a little plain, where the poor used to assemble to receive food and alms. The traces of the stone benches yet remain. Of this spot Madame Horthemel's view is a very exact representation. Near this, originally, was the porter's lodge, and rooms for the servants, but of these no traces but the foundations remain.

On passing under this archway, we found ourselves in what was the grand outer* court of the monastery,

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* The external court of the monastery extended itself from east to west, being much broader from side to side, than it was long from north to south. The principal entrance gate was in the north wall, almost in the angle which it forms with the west wall, and near the dyke of the lake. It was a fine old Gothic gate-way. On the right was a door for foot-passengers; above it, and on each side, were apartments appropriated to the porter, and other servants. The porter's lodge was termed the guard-room. Immediately adjoining to it, was a wash-house, two shoe-makers', and curriers' shops, and a large store-house for leather.

The west of the great court, or the right on entering, was occupied by the dovecote, the house of St. Theobald, the houses of M. de St. Marthe, and other confessors of Port Royal; a large infirmary, and halls for servants. The space under the roofs of these buildings, was appropriated to granaries: they all had gardens attached to them, and there were also various offices, which contained the wine-presses, vats, cooperage, &c. and laundries.

The south side of the court, or that in front, on entering, was occupied by the church, with the refectories for strangers, on the left, and a building for parlors on the right, whence a wall

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which was formerly interspersed with trees, and was bounded in front by the church, and the saloons for

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extended as far as the dovecote, with a door leading to the inner court. The strangers' refectory was a handsome building, three stories high, with ten windows in each row. The turn and first tourrieres apartments and garden were also attached to this building. The church was very large, being eight windows in length; and the principal entrance was by the north transept, which projected into the court. The building appropriated to the parlors of St. Denis, St. Austin, St. Peter and Paul, and St. Michael, also formed a similar and corresponding projection; and a low wall, drawn from one to the other, inclosed the external burying-ground, which thus was a narrow strip of ground, cut off from the outer court, and parallel to the side of the church.

The north of the court, or the side of the entrance-gate, was occupied on the right by carpenters' shops, smiths' forges, locksmiths, and three large stables, all with corn lofts; and on the left, opposite the church, was a noble range of buildings, for the reception of guests, who made retreats at the monastery. One part of the building was appropriated to men, the other to women, each having a distinct entrance, staircase, and servants. The whole was four stories high, having twelve fine windows in a row, and a beautiful garden behind, extending to the north wall of enclosure of the monastery.

The east side of the outer court, or the left side on entering, was bounded by a low wall, separating it from the establishment of the Duchess of Longueville.

The whole court was turfed, and interspersed with fine forest trees,—a venerable and wide spreading ash-tree in the centre, was peculiarly cited for its size and beauty.

The

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the reception of guests staying at PORT ROYAL; on the left by a wall, separating it from Madame de Longue-

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The church of Port Royal, which was turned to the east, had been built at the beginning of the 13th century, and dedicated on the 25th of June, 1230, under the pontificate of Gregory the Ninth. It was built in the shape of a cross, and the style of architecture was light Gothic, with slender shafted pillars, lancet-shaped windows and high pointed arches, like Salisbury Cathedral. The high altar was to the east, and behind it was the turn of the sacristy. The nave was the choir of the nuns. The south transept was closed, and contained the chapiter-house and the noviciate. The north transept which projected into the external court, was the grand entrance of the church from without, and over the door was a magnificent painted glass window.

Only the north transept and north aisle were appropriated to visitors, the rest was within the monastic grate.

Over the high altar stood the fine painting of the *Last Supper*, by Philippe Champagne, who was one of the disciples of Port Royal, and whose daughter had taken the veil there. On the demolition of Port Royal des Champs, it was placed in the choir of the nuns of Port Royal de Paris, and is now in the collection of the Louvre, where it holds a distinguished place amongst the paintings of the Flemish school, for its fine execution, and its rich and harmonious coloring; but it is chiefly interesting, as containing, under the characters of the twelve apostles, capital portraits of the most celebrated amongst the recluses of Port Royal. St. John has been recognised as the portrait of Antoine le Maitre. Le Maitre de Saci, his brother, is depicted in the figure of the apostle behind Judas. The figure, whose hands are clasped together, and who is standing behind Le Maitre, is Arnauld D'Andilly; the figure in the corner of the picture presents a capital portrait of Pascal,

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ville's hotel; and near the entrance door, and on the side next the lake, by laundries, carpenters, locksmiths,

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Nicole and the Grand Arnauld are likewise in the group. Champagne painted three pictures of this design. One of them of small dimensions is in the Luxembourg gallery. On each side of the altar-piece was a fine picture, on one side the virgin, and the other St. John the Baptist. The altar itself, and the balustrade of wood which inclosed it, were beautifully carved, as likewise the four wooden candlesticks and crucifix, which were its only decorations. Opposite the high altar on each side the grate, were two doors leading into the choir, which were called the doors of the sacraments, because through these doors they were taken to administer the sick. Over each of these doors was a fine picture: one of Christ as the Good Shepherd, bringing back the lost sheep on his shoulders, and treading on thorns; and on the other a nun crowned with thorns praying, standing before a crucifix.

The nuns' choir was remarkable for the beauty of its architecture, and for the elegance and highly finished decorations and carving of the nuns' stalls. The choir chairs of the nuns especially were superb. They cost in 1555, the sum of one thousand two hundred and eighty livres, when Jeanne de la Fin, the second Abbesse of that name, purchased them for the choir. At the destruction of Port Royal, they were purchased much below their value by the Bernardines. Indeed, the magnificence with which the whole of the church was fitted up, was the work of the same lady, one of the former Abbesses of Port Royal. She presided over the monastery in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and had very considerably extended the domain of her Abbey, augmented its revenues, and adorned its interior. She was buried in the choir, and at the end of her

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glaziers, and shoe-makers' work-shops, with three large stables, all which latter had workmen, and ser-

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epitaph was placed by way of motto, and according to the punning genius of the age, the common adage,

"La Fin couronne l'œuvre."

Nearly the whole floor of the church was covered with tumular stones of black marble, or lozenges of the same, for the Abbesses. The eloquence of the epitaphs of Port Royal is well known; they were mostly from the elegant and classic pens of M. M. Hamon or Dodart. Amongst the most remarkable persons interred in the church, were Arnauld d'Andilly, Varet, St. Marthe, Du Chemin, Du Gué de Bagnols, La Potherie, Saci, Duc de Ponchâteau, Innocent Fai, &c.

A very few years ago was found amongst a heap of rubbish at Magny, the tumulary stone of the learned, polite, and pious Arnauld d'Andilly: it bore this short but touching inscription:

"Sub sole vanitas; supra solem veritas."

In the north aisle of the church was a chapel *dedicated to* the Blessed Virgin, and a door out of it to the external burying-ground, which lay under the side of the church, between the transept of St. Laurence at the one end, and the parlors at the other, and was cut off from the outer court by a low wall uniting their projections.

Here were buried the servants, and many of the recluses and friends of Port Royal, amongst others Racine the poet. A cross stood in the centre, and the graves were marked by crosses or slabs of black marble. Above the portal of entrance to this burying-ground, were the following inscriptions: without,

"Time is yet before thee."

within,

"Time is for ever behind thee."

A quaint

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vants' rooms above, and extensive granaries over all. Besides which, in one corner, was a large infirmary for the servants, and the house and garden of the confessor.

The whole is now one level plain of turf, scattered with occasional ruins, and regular traces of foundations; but so very little remains, that with the excep-

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A quaint verse in old French was also often repeated:

"Tous ces morts ont vécu, toi qui vis, tu mourras;
"Ce jour terrible approche, et tu n'y penses pas."

which might be thus rendered:

"These dead once liv'd, and thou who liv'st shalt die.
"Thou heed'st it not, yet that dread day draws nigh."

A sun-dial too was placed in the burying ground, bearing the inscription,

"Loquor, sed non cæcis."

The chapter-house has been already mentioned, as having been formed in the south transept of the church. It was a Gothic building, supported by one beautiful light pillar in the centre, and very much resembling that at Salisbury. It contained several fine pictures of great artists. Amongst others was one of the Miracle de la Sainte Epine, by Champagne; that operated on his own daughter by the intercession of the Mere Agnes, and which is now to be seen in the Louvre. There was also a very celebrated picture of the Mother Angelica, sitting by the side of a table, on which was a portrait of M. de St. Cyran, and giving the book of the constitutions of Port Royal to the Mother Agnes, who was kneeling.

There were also pictures of St. Bennet and St. Bernard, and several admirable portraits of the M. M. Angelique, Agnes, Angelique de St. Jean, Suireau des Anges, &c. &c.

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tion of the buildings I before mentioned, they are generally speaking, I should imagine, not above eighteen inches high, except in some few places, where they were about as high as my head, as I stood by them.

Some way to the left of the entrance, extends a long range of ruined foundations, which, on consulting the description of the buildings of PORT ROYAL, by Besogne, Clemencet, and Racine, and comparing them with Mad. Horthemel's plans and drawings, is, I find, the long range of buildings appropriated to guests, which were divided into separate houses for men and women, and which had a very pretty garden behind it, extending as far as the wall of the monastery, and a solitude, or planted seclusion for meditation on one side. Nothing of all this is now perceptible. The whole is one green meadow, the verdure of which is most beautiful, and enamelled with a thousand different field-flowers, which, as you crush them, exhale the richest perfume; and the ruins themselves are covered with a rich profusion of the most beautiful creeping plants.

After crossing what was the grand entrance court, (and it is by no means an inconsiderable distance) we came to what was formerly the site of the church.

Nothing of this church now remains but one vast pile of ruins extending on either side, festooned with the most beautiful and fragrant wild flowers, whose vivid tints gleam intermixed with brambles, thistles, and nettles. The goats were browzing on the shrubs which grew amidst the neglected ruins, and sheep were

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lying down under the low arcades which in several places just here remain entire.

Although the whole is so demolished, that none of these ruins I imagine can be above six or seven feet high, yet amidst the heaps of stones and rubbish lying about them, we often traced the heads of angels, or rich pieces of Gothic fret-work, or broken columns or capitals, peeping out under the rich profusion of wild flowers which covered them, and which so completely mantle the ruins, that at some distance it would not be easy at once to distinguish them.

Cattle were quietly grazing on the green expanse of what was once the church. At the farther end, where once the high altar stood, is now a spreading walnut-tree, under whose wide shade we stood for some time contemplating the scene of ruin before us; like the countenance of death in the righteous, its aspect was hallowed and beaming peacefulness amidst the stilness and silence of desolation.

Yet a few paces farther was the choir, where the nuns of Port Royal performed the continual service of the Holy Sacrament, and where the ecclesiastics and Abbesses of the monastery were interred. There, rising in the midst of a pile of shapeless ruins, a picturesque and aged weeping willow bends its silvery foliage over their graves.

On one of the rude stones beneath, some visitor probably, has deeply but rudely scratched with a knife, the words: "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Zion."

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The yellow lichen was beginning to deface some of the letters of this inscription, and many years are probably now passed by, since the individual who wrote it, has rejoined the saints he mourns.

Immediately behind the church which formed one side of the square, were the cloisters* and burying-

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* Immediately behind the south wall of the church, which formed one side of a square, were the cloisters, and ranges of buildings, forming an extensive quadrangle, inclosing in its area the internal or nuns' burying ground. These buildings were from two to four stories high, and each side was about two hundred feet in length. On the lower floor were included the nuns' refectory, the scholars' refectory, the infirmaries' refectory, the common work-room, and the school-room. Above were the dormitories. Each dormitory contained a passage about ten feet wide, and two hundred feet long; and on each side were doors opening into cells ten royal feet *wide*, and six deep. There were forty cells in each dormitory, twenty on each side. Both the second and third floors were so occupied. Above all, in the roofs, which were beautifully finished, were various store-rooms, drying rooms for linen, &c. &c.

The refectory was a very noble room. It had six large windows looking to the east, and four very large ones at the south end.

The ceiling was supported by a colonnade of five pillars; on each of which were inscriptions as follows. Upon the

1st—My meat is, to do the will of him that sent me.

(On the reverse) Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.

2nd—The bread of God is he who descended from heaven, and who gives life unto the world.

Reverse

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ground: at present grass and bright field-flowers cover the whole expanse, yet the unevenness of the ground

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Reverse—Blessed is he who shall eat of that bread in the kingdom of God.

3d—Blessed are they who have been called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.

Reverse—Whether ye eat, or whether ye drink, or whatsoever ye do, do ye it to the glory of God.

4th—Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you.

Reverse—Godliness with contentment is great gain.

There was nothing on the fifth pillar, but there were texts of Scripture hung all round the walls. The refectory was furnished with six large tables, two along each side, and one across each end, with wooden benches. And between the third and fourth windows, was a high pulpit, from which the Scriptures were read during meal times.

All the buildings above mentioned surrounded the cloisters, the space in the centre of which was occupied by the nuns burying ground.

The cloisters, which were directly behind the church, were unglazed, and about twenty royal feet in width. They consisted of ten arcades on the side next the church and the opposite side, and of thirteen arcades on the two others. Hence they were about sixty paces long, one way, and seventy-four the other. The burying ground of the nuns in the centre was turfed, and was divided into four compartments by two crossing flagged walks. In the centre was erected a large wooden crucifix, upon steps of stone. A number of little crosses marked the nuns' graves. It was chiefly in this burying ground, under the cloisters, in the church and chapter-house, as well as in the external burying ground, that were placed the celebrated monumental inscriptions

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still records the barbarous exhumation of 1711, and the remains of the stone cross in the centre is covered with the names of pilgrims who visit the spot.

Many of the bodies of the saints of Port Royal, no doubt yet remain undisturbed. At the time the new dormitory and cloisters were built, the pavements

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of Port Royal. In the centers of the arcades of the cloisters, between the pillars, were the following inscriptions:

(They were written in embossed letters, and painted black)

1st—Riches are the ruin of religious houses; but poverty, when evangelical, edifies and preserves them.

2d—He who perseveres to the end, shall be saved.

3d—In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world.

4th—We have been buried with Christ in baptism, that we might die unto sin: so that as he is risen from the dead, by the power of his Father, we might also walk in newness of life.

5th—Many are called, but few are chosen.

Such was the disposition of the cloisters, burying ground, and dormitories. Behind the east end of the church were the kitchens, opening into a court surrounded by their respective offices, sculleries, wash-houses, woodstacks, larders, dairies, bake-houses, poultry-yards, chandlery, weaving rooms, &c. &c. Behind the west end of the church was a court, surrounded by the infirmary, a long range of building on the south, and on the other sides by store-houses for glass, and for drugs: the surgery, the apothecaries' shop, the elaboratory, the conservatory, the fruitery, &c. &c. There was also a large place for faggot-stacks to supply the infirmary, and this court was well turfed, and planted with excellent dry walks, and a raised terrace for invalids.

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of the church and the burying ground were raised nine feet. All the bodies which were interred previously to this time, probably yet remain there. Amongst them it is supposed must be included those of the Duchesse de Luynes, and of M. de Sericourt.

The church of Port Royal was not absolutely destroyed, till some time after the general demolition. Its tower subsisted till very lately. A very few years ago it fell, and some of its fragments struck the earth with such force as to discover the lid of a coffin.

On opening it, appeared the body of a priest in perfect preservation, arrayed in his sacerdotal vestments. No inscription disclosed his name, but the heavenly peace that sat on his countenance, marked him as one of the worthies of Port Royal.

Continuing our road strait forward, over the former garden of the monastery, which was of very considerable extent, we came to the beautiful stream which intersects it, and which formerly divided the kitchen, herb, and fruit gardens, from what was termed the solitude; which being removed beyond it, was at a sufficient distance from the monastery to form a place of retirement, where the nuns used to walk and meditate.

The solitude was formerly planted thickly with forest trees, which, after extending over the remainder of the meadow, also covered the hills bounding the valley beyond. Formerly, the stream was beautifully clear, and a little bridge over it, led to the desert; but, at present, it is in some places choaked with flags and reeds,

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or mantled by the most beautiful aquatic plants; amongst the profusion of which, I particularly remarked the Parnassia Palustris. The long grass which fringes its banks, was exquisitely luxuriant and beautiful, growing to a height I never had seen before; and a number of wild water-fowl, especially moor-hens and dobchicks, were diving and sporting amongst the reeds.

Not very far beyond this stream, arose the precipitous hills of the opposite boundary of the valley, covered with forest trees.

Just at their foot was situated the desert I mentioned before; and at this distance, we distinctly discerned the rustic amphitheatre, partly natural, and partly rudely shaped by art, which was formed in the surrounding rocks, and thickly sheltered by trees. Here the nuns repaired in the afternoon, in summer, to work and hold their conference.

An ascent of rude stone steps formerly led to the top of this amphitheatre, which was surmounted by a stone cross, from whence paths diverged through the woods up the hill, in various directions. The nuns sat to work on stone benches below. A few vestiges of the stone seats, and of the cross, yet remain.

We only saw this from the side of the stream on which we stood; but we did not go to it, as there was no bridge on which we could cross.

Having gained the utmost attainable verge of the site of the monastic enclosure, we determined, as we had entered on the right side, to return by the left, that we might see as much as possible.

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* We accordingly varied our course, and after crossing a considerable space, we came to a long range of low arcades, extending to a considerable depth, under a lofty platform above. These were so grown over with brush-wood and forest trees, and so festooned with clematis and other creeping plants, that I at first took them for natural cavities in a ledge of lime-stone rock; but on consulting the map, I found them to be the arches supporting the terrace of Madame la Duchesse de Longueville's garden.

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* The Hotel Longueville occupied the angle formed by the north and east walls of enclosure, extending from thence parallel with the grand entrance court to the church. The access was from the exterior, on the border of the Chevreuse road, by a large Gothic gateway, corresponding pretty nearly with the grand entrance door of the monastery, at the opposite end of the same, the north wall. The establishment of the Duchesse of Longueville consisted of a large entrance court, surrounded by her stables and offices, and an inner court, or turfed lawn, on the left of which was her palace, a handsome building, with two wings for her attendants. Adjoining was a very elegant but small house, belonging to her friend, Madame des Vertus: and in the angle formed by the juncture of her house with that of the duchesse, was a glazed covered way, extending across the lawn to the tribune of these ladies, near the high altar of the church of Port Royal. Behind their houses, as far as the outer wall of enclosure, was a fine garden, a solitude or wilderness, and a raised terrace, planted with a double avenue of trees, and decorated with flower beds, which commanded a full view of the monastic gardens, and that part of the enclosure belonging to the nuns.

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The establishment of Madame de Longueville, occupied the whole of the left side of Port Royal, as far as the buildings extended.

The thick plantations, and trees at the foot of the terrace, rendered the space just below, an agreeable walk to the nuns; and the arcades running very deep under it, and being furnished with seats, answered the purposes of cells for meditation, to those in the garden below.

Near this place, oozing from a rocky bed, and entirely inclosed with venerable and aged trees, gushes a cool and limpid fountain: it is called the fountain of the M. Angelique; and close by its side is the remains of the stone seat, which was her peculiar spot of retirement and of prayer.

This place, where the trees interweaving their branches above, form a thick gloom, and where no sound is heard but the gurgling of the water, was peculiarly striking.

From thence we continued coasting along under the side of Madame de Longueville's terrace. The trees and brush-wood, which, I conclude, once formed regular avenues above and below it, now spread their branches, hoary and rough, with grey lichens, in every rude and fantastic form; and amidst the rubbish and weeds, every gay garden-flower and shrub, that once decorated this spot, is yet seen running wild, and spreading, in uncultured and rich profusion, over the desolation.

Myrtles, lilacs, and roses, flourish amidst the briony,

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clematis, brambles, and nettles; the Portugal laurel spreads over the ruined archways; and the delicate, but frail blossom of the gum cistus, scatters its snowy showers amidst the dark ivy, or the rough fern and maiden hair, that streams from the creviced stone-work, or yet upholds the tottering walls.

As it was in the month of September we visited Port Royal, these flowers were not then all in blossom; but we gathered several twigs of the lilacs, and of the rose trees.

On reaching the entrance of the Hotel Longueville, we came out through the great gate, into the Chevreuse road, where we had ordered our carriage and valet de place to meet us. Instead, however, of ascending the hill to Les Granges, we determined to return on foot, by the outside wall of the monastery, to examine the towers built during the civil wars; and then to go on, in the carriage, to the church of St. Lambert, to visit the place where the remains were interred after the general exhumation.

We accordingly set out, ordering the carriage to follow us; and Madame Methouard quitted us, to go back to Les Granges, to prepare us a dinner against our return.

Pursuing the Chevreuse road, from its entrance into the valley of Port Royal, towards St. Lambert, we had, on our left, the hills which immediately rose from the deep hollow way, thickly wooded with forest trees. The Spanish chesnut, beech, ash, and birch trees, were

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peculiarly picturesque, from their age and the variety and brightness of tints of their foliage.

We saw, amongst the woods, numbers of squirrels, chasing each other round the trees, and leaping from bough to bough; and likewise partridges, rabbits, and hares; of which latter, we saw some about the ruins.

To our right hand, was the grand enclosure wall of the monastery, flanked with its eight towers, built by the recluses during the period of the civil war. They must have been a perfect defence to the valley of Port Royal, as they completely command the defile of entrance.

About half way I should suppose down the wall of monastic enclosure, beyond the site of the buildings, and some way down the garden, the valley opens to the left; and our road wound round the bases of the hills into a cheerful country, gay with vineyards, and enriched with woods. The road, after it here quits the walls of Port Royal, is most beautiful. It is bordered all the way, in the French style, with avenues of high trees, which are so trained, as to rise into lofty colonnades, leaving a clear view between the stems, (the variety of whose tints are a great beauty,) and forming a light and verdant canopy of shade above.

On our left arose the wooded hills, no longer precipitous, as in the defile between them, but rising in a long and gradual slope; and on our right, the broad brook which traverses the garden of Port Royal, wound around their bases close by the road side.

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I cannot describe the extreme beauty and luxuriance of the vegetation. The wild roses, orchis, woodbines, the long grass in full flower, the Parnassia Palustris, with an innumerable quantity of other flowers, decorated the whole of the way; and though each singly are often met with in our own country, yet, both in brightness of tints, in growth, in fragrance, and in the lavish profusion with which they adorn every step, the wild flowers here exceed every thing which is to be met with, even in the most beautiful and sheltered spots in the south of England.

Our road now took another turn to the right; and quitting the hills, strikes across the wide and cultivated vale towards Chevreuse. The beauty of the bold sweep which the road makes in this place, is not to be described; and the gay coloured dresses of the country people and villagers, who are seen passing to and fro between the tall stems of the trees, have a very lively and pleasing effect.

On the gradual slope of ascent, on the opposite side of the valley, a little to the left, out of the road to Chevreuse, stands the little church of St. Lambert, completely embosomed in trees.

Close to it on the left, as you enter the church-yard, stands the house formerly occupied by the celebrated Tillemont. It is placed like an English parsonage. It is a neat stone country-house, with five windows in a row in front, and a very pleasant garden.

The church of St. Lambert is any thing but magnificent. It is one of the smallest I ever saw. I should imagine it to be, perhaps, about the size of Radipole

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church, near WEYMOUTH; or CHARLECOMB, near BATH.

It is situated about half way up the wide, sloping, and cultured hill; and I rather think the church-yard itself, but if not, the spot contiguous, commands a cheerful view of all the narrow valley of Port Royal, and of the river, or brook, for it is only about eighteen feet wide.

The door being open, we entered the church, which is remarkable for nothing but its shabbiness. We found, however, by the high altar, another altar, which was taken from Port Royal at the time of its demolition.

Its construction is rude, and the figures are in bad taste, and have been much mutilated during the times of terror. After searching for some time amongst the grass and nettles, with which the church-yard is overgrown, we discovered the four stones which mark the wide pit or grave in which were interred the mangled remains of the saints of Port Royal.

Amongst the number of excellent persons whose remains were cast here, in one general mass, HAMON was particularly distinguished by talents and piety. Hamon might be termed like St. Luke, at once the evangelist and the physician of the disciples. Well known both in the literary and professing world, by his various productions, both on subjects of biblical criticism, by his moral and spiritual essays, and by the elegant Latinity and eloquence of the celebrated epitaphs of Port Royal. He only devoted the hours stolen from his repose to literary pursuits. The day was spent in the gratuitous exercise of his profession of physician, and in which he had attained the first

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eminence, both in Paris, and in the estimation of the court. His charity was so ardent, that he deprived himself of fire, and, comparatively speaking, of food, in order to extend his bounties to the poor. For two and twenty years, he subsisted on nothing but the bran bread made for the dogs of Port Royal, and water, in order to give away his daily portion of food.

He every day walked above twenty miles, without having broken his fast, to visit the poor, carrying them food and medicine with his own hands; and in order not to lose a moment, he always carried with him a New Testament, which he had acquired the habit of reading as he walked; so that he was at once a physician to the souls and bodies of his patients.

The recluse who has recorded his life, and composed his epitaph, terminates it by observing, "He entered into eternal life the 22nd of February, 1687, aged 69, occupied in the contemplation of the mercies of our Lord, and with his heart and mind fixed on *Christ*, the mediator between God and man.

A few extracts from one of M. Hamon's works, "*l'Explication du Cantique des Cantiques*," are given in the long note which terminates this volume.

I must here observe, that, remote as the little church of St. Lambert appears, we were by no means the first who visited it. Since the destruction of Port Royal, it has always been esteemed a consecrated spot; and during the summer season, the ruins of Port Royal have constantly attracted numbers of visitors, from the piety of the devout, or the curiosity of the learned.

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Port Royal is still held in such veneration, that on the second of November, *(All Souls day,)* and on the twenty-ninth of October, (the anniversary of its dispersion,) there are multitudes of persons who have "*la devotion*" to visit this consecrated spot; and many of them make, what is termed, the pilgrimage of Port Royal. That is, they take a regular tour, divided into ten or twelve stations, of all the places most remarkable as the scenes of the lives, or deaths, or burial places of the Port Royalists; and at each they spend some time in prayer, meditation, or other devotional exercises. A book, indeed, is published, entitled, "*Manuel du Pelerinage de Port Royal:*" it was written by the Abbe Gazagnes. This little volume begins by a calendar of the deaths and places of burial of all the Port Royalists. It then lays down the plan of the stations, forming a complete guide to those, whom curiosity or devotion may lead to take this little tour. It mentions for what each station is distinguished, and then gives a ritual of psalms, prayers, or meditations, which may be appropriately used at each. They are generally most beautiful selections from Scripture, and contain not only most pathetic anthems on the destruction of Port Royal, but most striking prayers for their persecutors.

Amongst these stations, which begin at Port Royal de Paris, and terminate at Port Royal des Champs, are several places we visited; as Port Royal de Paris, where the M. Angelique and Suireau des Anges are buried; the church of St. Etienne du Mont, where Pascal

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did lie; and the church of St. Jacques du Haut pas, where we visited the tomb of M. de St. Cyran, and saw the chapel which, before the revolution, contained the remains of Madame de Longueville.

Many other stations, however, are included in the tour; as Palaiseau, Magni, la Ferté Milon, and many others; so that the whole pilgrimage would probably occupy about a week.

The country people, whose parents benefited by the piety or charity of Port Royal, are particularly assiduous and devout in visiting its ruins, and the common grave of their benefactors at St. Lambert. We were told, that both, in the October which completed the century of its destruction, and on that of the remarkably hard winter two years ago, many aged people were seen kneeling, and some of them for hours, with their white locks exposed to a pouring rain, both amongst the ruins of Port Royal, and on the site of the interment, in the church of St. Lambert.

Having completely satisfied our curiosity, we began to feel the fatigue of walking several hours; we therefore got into the carriage which had followed us, and went back to Les Granges,* where Madame Methouard had

* The following description of les Granges, is given by the historians of Port Royal.

"On the height of Port Royal, between the north and west, is a large farm called Les Granges, which is one of the dependencies of this Abbey. It was originally built simply as a farm. This place consists of a large yard, containing about three acres. It

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prepared us a very comfortable dinner in M. le Maître's room.

On our road from PORT ROYAL to ST. LAMBERT, I

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had four large door-ways: one of which was the entrance from the road, another opened into the garden, the third led to the lake or river below, which was abundantly stocked with fish. There was also another door for the vintage. A small door led immediately down the steep to the Abbey church. The farm-yard of Les Granges was surrounded by various buildings. On one side was the long range occupied by the recluses, and behind was their garden and orchard. Another was occupied by kitchens, store-houses, granaries, stables for forty cows, and folds for four hundred sheep; likewise shops for smiths, wheel-wrights, shoe-makers, also wine and cyder presses. Poultry-yards, hay-ricks, faggots, stacks, &c.; and cyder cellars, capable of containing eight hundred hogsheads. There is also accommodation for a very considerable number of carts and waggons. Near the garden was an orchard of five acres. In the centre, is a large well, twenty-seven toises deep. The machinery contrived by Pascal, enables a child of twelve years old, at once to draw up and let down two buckets, one full, the other empty, each capable of holding nine ordinary buckets full.

All the land of the Abbey of Port Royal is thus valued: three hundred and sixty acres of arable land, in one single piece on the north, twenty-seven acres in the valley, on which is the site of the monastery, eight hundred acres of coppice wood and timber, in one piece at the south and west, one hundred acres of wood in the valley, twenty-five acres of the same in the park of Vaumurier, and forty-five acres of meadow-land in a piece; in all, one thousand three hundred and fifty-two acres. Port Royal had Seignorial rights, and held courts of "moienne et basse justice."

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forgot to mention the Chateau of Vaumurier, the mansion erected at Port Royal by the Duke and Duchess of Luynes. He resided there a considerable time, collecting around him a society of the most pious and learned ecclesiastics, the result of whose conferences was the excellent translation of the New Testament, known by the name of the Mons translation.

The Duke of Luynes, after the death of his first wife, made a present of this chateau to Port Royal, where it afterwards served as a house of reception to strangers visiting the monastery. This edifice was destroyed by the M. Angelique de St. Jean, who preferred demolishing it, rather than granting it to the Dauphin, who wished to apply it to an unworthy purpose.

The ruins of this mansion yet remain. It was a square house, surrounded in the time of the civil wars with deep ditches, which yet remain; all round their high embankments, extend thick hedges of lilac, intermingled with vines running wild over them, and which still produce excellent grapes. The kitchens and cellars still exist, but we had no time to examine the ruins closely.

After dinner, Madame Methouard gave us an excellent dessert of very fine fruit; the most valuable part of which, in our eyes, was a plate of pears from a tree planted by Arnauld d'Andilli, and some peaches planted by Pascal. Having finished our repast, we again went out into the farm-yard of Les Granges, to see the celebrated well dug in the midst of it under Pascal's direction. This well is twenty-seven French toises in depth; and draws up the water, from the level of the

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valley of Port Royal below. The curiosity consisted in the machinery contrived by Pascal, and executed under his direction; by which a child of ten years old, could with the greatest facility, immediately draw up a quantity of water equal to nine common buckets.

Pascal's well stands exactly in the middle of the farm-yard of Les Granges, just opposite the door of the house; but it is not discernible to those unacquainted with it, because it has been completely surrounded by piles of fire-wood, faggots, and hay-stacks. This has been done to prevent accidents, as the Cossacks, during their abode at Port Royal, broke down the wall, which formerly guarded the top,—the machine for drawing the water has ceased to exist for some years.

On one side of the farm-yard remains a sort of dismantled hovel, or seed-house, the remains of a cell which Pascal used as a study, and where he was continually accustomed to retire during his visits at Port Royal, when he wished to be in perfect and uninterrupted solitude.

We then visited the garden behind the house, which was formerly that of the recluses. It is very spacious, and surrounded by a high wall, and planted with abundance of fruit trees. From space to space are managed little green arbors, which served as places of retirement and meditation to the recluses during their work.

This place is something between a kitchen-garden and an orchard.

Amongst the fruit trees, we saw several of a great

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age, completely covered with moss and lichen, and of which only a very few branches still bore any fruit. These were planted by the hands of Arnauld d'Andilli. Three of them only still bore fruit; but the others, though completely withered, are left untouched, and fenced round, out of respect to the memory of the saints of Port Royal. "They are holy trees," said Madame Methouard.

From the garden, we visited what was formerly the orchard of the recluses, whence we took one farewell view of the ruins of Port Royal.

Scarcely an hour after quitting the demolitions of Port Royal, we again passed on our way back to Paris, the palace of Versailles, now desolated like it, where the decree for that demolition was signed. And on the second day after we visited the spot of the barbarous exhumations of Port Royal, we stood upon the spot at Saint Denis, where the ashes of that sovereign who ordered it, were torn from their long sepulture, and with a like ferocity, scattered to the winds. A just retribution from God! but which does not lessen the awful criminality of its brutal perpetrators amongst men!

At the ruins of Port Royal, our reception was in the adjacent seclusion of LE MAITRE and SACI; at the desolated palace of Versailles, our inn was also an adjoining appendage,—the house of MADAME DE POMPADOUR.

We will institute no comparison between the associations excited by the remains of the sanctuary of the

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Pascals and the *Tillemonts*, and those of the superb palace of that sovereign who destroyed it.

The saints who worshipped in the one, and the sovereigns who amused themselves in the other, have long since alike stood before the tribunal of the SUPREME JUDGE. THE HOLY ONE, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; but who has declared, that "as is his majesty, so is his mercy likewise."

The saints of Port Royal, and the sovereigns of Versailles, are now equally passed off the brief stage of mortality: both are alike numbered amongst things that *were*. To each, the blandishment of affection or adulation is past, and the severe integrity of history is begun. To each, nothing now remains, but an unalterable sentence in eternity, and an indelibly fixed reputation in time.

On both has equally passed the awful stamp of DEATH. *Death* which unalterably pronounces on the reputation on earth, as on the soul in the world of spirits, that solemn sentence: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still. He that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

Within almost the short distance of a walk, the remains of the palace of Versailles, and of the monastery of Port Royal, present examples: the first of which has often been cited as an instance of the madness of the people; and the latter as a monument of the grinding and oppressive tyranny, by which that ungovernable madness was at length provoked. To the

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Christian spectator, both alike inculcate the same awful lesson ; that absolute power, by whomsoever exercised, when unsanctified by religion, is only a potent engine, by which man out of the abundance of a corrupt and unregenerate heart, does evil, and that continually.

Both the remains of the monastery of Port Royal, and those of the palace of Versailles, are silent and desolate :- but the dismantled remains of the former are crowded with the names of frequent visitors rudely scratched ; texts of Scripture, and benedictory verses meet the eye in every direction, peeping amongst festoons of wild flowers ; and at the distance of a century, its remote path-ways are worn by the feet of pilgrims, who still turn out of their way to view its hallowed remains.

" Precious, in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints."

M. A. SCHIMMELPENNINCK.

Bristol,
December 30th, 1815.

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EXTRAITS

DES

ÉCRITS DE M. M. DE PORT ROYAL,

Sur la Nécessité de la Foi en Jesus Christ pour être sauvé.

RIEN de plus grand, de plus saint, de plus auguste dans Jesus Christ, dans l'Eglise et dans la religion chrétienne, que le sacerdoce et le sacrifice de Jesus Christ. C'est le chef d'œuvre de la sagesse et de la bonté d'un Dieu envers les hommes pécheurs : c'est l'objet de toutes les promesses depuis le commencement du monde : c'est la fin de toute la loi ancienne : c'est le sujet des désirs et de l'attente de tous les justes qui ont vécu avant l'incarnation du verbe : c'est le fondement de toutes nos espérances : c'est le centre et le sanctuaire du culte véritable, seul digne de la Majesté Divine, seul proportionné aux besoins et aux devoirs de l'homme. Le croiroit-on, à voir le peu d'idée que les Chrétiens en ont communément, l'abus qu'ils en font, le peu de fruit qu'ils en retirent?

Jesus Christ seul pouvoit offrir un sacrifice digne de Dieu, et capable de reconcilier l'homme avec lui. Il

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renouvelle, continue et achève sur nos autels l'oblation qu'il a faite de lui-même à son Père sur la croix, et qu'il fait dans le sanctuaire céleste.

La religion véritable est un culte religieux rendu à l'être souverain et infini qui est Dieu ; et ce culte consiste principalement dans le sacrifice, comme étant l'hommage suprême qui est dû à Dieu, et qui n'est dû qu'à lui, comme dit Saint Augustin : " Sacrificium nemo est qui audeat dicere deberi, nisi Deo soli." Aussi non-seulement il n'y a jamais eu de religion sans sacrifice, mais encore on n'a jamais offert de sacrifice, comme dit encore Saint Augustin, qu'à celui qu'on croyoit ou qu'on feignoit être Dieu. Et le démon même, qui vouloit se faire adorer dans l'univers à la place du vrai Dieu, ne s'est fait rendre les honneurs du sacrifice par les idolâtres que parcequ'il savoit que le sacrifice est dû au vrai Dieu. Enfin Saint Augustin ne craint pas de dire que ce culte de Dieu par le sacrifice est aussi ancien que le monde, qu'il a commencé dans le paradis terrestre, et que les deux premiers hommes étant dans le paradis sans aucune tache du péché, s'offroient à Dieu comme des victimes très pures.

Ce culte n'a jamais été interrompu même depuis le péché. Les deux premiers enfans d'Adam, Cain et Abel, ont offert des sacrifices, et ont appris à leurs descendans à rendre à Dieu cet hommage souverain que la créature doit à son Créateur. Mais la malice des hommes croissant dans le monde, à mesure que le genre humain se multiplioit, et l'univers entier n'étant presque plus qu'un temple d'idoles où tout étoit Dieu

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excepté Dieu même, et où le démon faisoit adorer les passions mêmes les plus détestables; Dieu pour ruiner peu-à-peu ces sacriléges et ces abominations, manifesta la grandeur de son nom à un peuple choisi, lui prescrivit lui-même un culte extérieur et sensible, et une forme de sacrifices conforme au plan qu'il s'étoit fait pour disposer les hommes à lui rendre dans la suite des tems une adoration spirituelle, vraiment digne de sa sainteté, et à lui offrir un sacrifice capable de lui plaire, et de les rendre eux-mêmes agréables à ses yeux.

Car toutes ces cérémonies, cette multitude de victimes, et ces oblations inutiles au salut, n'étoient que des crayons, des figures, des prophéties, et comme des gages de l'accomplissement futur des promesses que Dieu avoit faites à l'homme pécheur, de lui donner un Prêtre et un sacrifice nouveau, et une victime sainte, seule capable d'appaiser sa colère, de satisfaire pleinement à sa justice, de réparer le désordre que le péché avoit fait dans le monde, et de réunir l'homme avec Dieu. Ainsi depuis le péché d'Adam jusqu'à la consommation des siécles, non seulement il n'y a jamais eu, mais il n'y aura jamais, qu'une vraie victime expiatrice des péchés des hommes, et agréable à Dieu par elle-même. Et si avant que ce grand Prêtre eut parû dans le monde, en s'offrant lui-même pour victime, on a offert des animaux, ces sacrifices n'étoient ni commandés, ni acceptés qu'autant qu'ils promettoient, qu'ils prédisoient, et qu'ils representoient cet unique et singulier sacrifice, par lequel Dieu devoit être appaisé: ou plutôt ils ne faisoient qu'un seul sacrifice avec celui de Jesus Christ,

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qui pour cela est appelé l'agneau immolé dès la création du monde, en figures, en mystère, en representation, et comme en effigie.

Aussi Dieu dit-il lui-même à son peuple, par ses prophètes, que ces sacrifices, et la multitude des victimes qu'on lui égorge dans son temple, le dégoutent et lui déplaisent, et qu'il n'a pas besoin de leurs encens ni du sang des boucs et des taureaux. Et Jesus Christ lui-même, en entrant dans le monde, dit à son Père; selon l'Apôtre: "Vous n'avez point voulu d'hostie ni d'oblation; mais vous m'avez formé un corps, afin que je fûsse moi-même votre victime. Vous n'avez point agréé les holocaustes et les sacrifices pour le péché. Alors j'ai dit, me voici, je viens, mon Dieu, selon qu'il est écrit de moi dans le livre, pour faire votre volonté." En effet, Dieu, qui est esprit et vérité, pourroit-il se plaire à des sacrifices charnels et figuratifs, et peut-il agréer que ce qui peut l'adorer et l'aimer d'une manière digne de lui? Il n'y avoit donc que Jesus Christ qui pût, à proprement parler, remplir le premier devoir de la créature envers Dieu, et le premier acte de religion, qui est le sacrifice.

L'homme qui étoit seul capable de lui rendre sur la terre un hommage libre, raisonnable et volontaire, et qui étoit obligé de s'offrir à Dieu en qualité de victime, étant devenue par le péché impur et comme irrégulier, n'auroit en s'immolant soi-même jamais offert que des dons souillés, et indignes de la majesté de Dieu. Les animaux ne pouvoient pas non-plus tenir sa place, ni suppléer à son défaut. Comme le péché des hommes avoit infecté toutes les créatures, et étendu sur elles la

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malédiction, il n'y avoit plus dans le monde ni prêtres ni victimes qui fûssent dignes de Dieu. Et l'homme demeuroit chargé d'anathème sans pouvoir se reconcilier avec son créateur, lui rendre l'honneur qui lui étoit dû, et réparer son ingratitude et sa désobéissance.

C'est pourquoi Dieu, qui ne pouvoit s'adorer lui-même, et qui ne peut néanmoins être dignement adoré que par lui-même, a établi par l'incarnation de son verbe, le moyen ineffable de recevoir un culte et une adoration souveraine, et un sacrifice d'une dignité infinie, et d'avoir dans son propre sein de quoi se faire rendre un hommage éternel, et digne en toute manière de sa grandeur; puisqu'en Jesus Christ, le Prêtre, la victime, le temple et l'autel, le feu du sacrifice et le sacrifice même, sont aussi adorable que celui à qui le sacrifice est offert. Et comme ce sacrifice ne devoit pas être seulement un hommage de religion envers Dieu, mais un sacrifice de propitiation et de redemption pour l'homme, ce même Prêtre et cette même victime est Dieu et homme tout ensemble, pour pouvoir offrir à Dieu avec lui tous les hommes comme ses frères dans l'unité d'une même nature, et comme les membres de son corps.

Toutes ces sublimes vérités nous ont été enseignées par l'Apôtre Saint Paul, et sont consignées dans l'Epitre aux Hébreux, où il est particulièrement occupé à relever le sacerdoce et le sacrifice de Jesus Christ. Nous y appercevons que le sacerdoce et les sacrifices Lévitiques devant être abolis, à cause de leurs inutilités et de leur impuissance à purifier les cœurs et à conduire ceux qui

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s'en servoient à la véritable justice, il nous falloit un autre Prêtre selon l'ordre et la ressemblance de Melchisedeck, pour être le médiateur d'une nouvelle alliance, et de la reconciliation des hommes avec Dieu: que c'est ce qui a été accompli parfaitement sur la croix, où Jesus Chirst s'est offert lui-même à Dieu par l'esprit éternel comme une victime très sainte, pour expier les iniquités, et effacer les péchés de plusieurs: mais que Jesus Christ ayant fait le premier usage de son sacerdoce sur la croix, il l'a consommé par son entrée dans le ciel; et que ce n'est que dans le ciel et par l'état de sa vie glorieuse et immortelle, qu'il est entré pour toujours en possession de ce sacerdoce éternel, selon l'ordre de Melchisedeck.

Le sacerdoce et le sacrifice de Jesus Christ n'a donc pas fini, comme remarque Saint Paul, par sa mort comme celui des autres Prêtres; mais ayant été consommé dans la gloire, il est devenu l'auteur du salut éternel pour tous ceux qui lui obéissent. Ainsi c'est proprement par le mystère de sa résurrection et de son ascension, qu'il a été appelé et déclaré parfait Pontiffe, selon l'ordre de Melchisedeck, c'est-à-dire, Prêtre éternel.*

Ce n'est point avoir la vertu de l'espérance chrétienne, que de croire en général que Dieu sauvera ses élus sans ôser croire être de ce nombre, et de se laisser agiter sans fin de doutes et d'inquiétudes contre l'espérance de son salut. Saint Bernard veut même que chacun espère

* Instructions Chrétiennes pour les Religieuses de Port Royal, tom. iii. pp. 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431.

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que c'est pour lui en particulier que Dieu a préparé les biens éternels destinés à ceux qui le servent. Et voici comme il montre la liaison et l'enchainement des trois vertus théologales, la foi, l'espérance, et la charité. La foi dit dans nous : je crois que Dieu a préparé des biens ineffables à tous les fidèles. Voilà l'objet de la foi— L'espérance dit dans nous : ces grands biens que Dieu réserve à ses fidèles, sont pour moi, et Dieu me les réserve. La charité dit : je cours dans sa voie de toutes mes forces, afin de les acquérir.

Ces paroles nous font voir qu'il ne suffit pas pour avoir l'espérance chrétienne, de croire en général que Dieu a préparé de grands biens pour tous ses fidèles ; car c'est là l'objet de la foi, et non de l'espérance ; mais ce qu'ajoute l'espérance à la foi, c'est qu'elle rend particulière une proposition qui étoit générale, et qu'elle s'applique à elle-même les promesses de Dieu, en disant : Dieu *me* réserve ces grand biens.

En effet, si l'espérance ne nous appliquoit ainsi en particulier les promesses générales de Dieu, notre espérance ne seroit jamais ferme, mais toujours flottante et incertaine. Et néanmoins l'Ecriture nous enseigne le contraire, puisqu'elle attribue la principale fermeté de l'ame à l'espérance ; comme lorsque Saint Paul dit : Si vous demeurez fermes dans la foi, et immobiles dans l'espérance : et en un autre endroit, si vous conservez votre confiance et votre espérance ferme jusqu'à la fin. Et dans l'Epitre aux Hébreux, il appelle l'espérance l'ancre de l'ame. Nous avons, dit-il, une consolation très forte, ayant recours à notre espérance, qui est ferme et

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assurée, et qui sert d'ancre à notre ame pour l'affermir. L'espérance ne doit donc pas être flottante, puisque son effet, selon Saint Paul, est d'empêcher que le vaisseau de l'ame ne soit flottant, comme l'ancre arrête le navire et le tient ferme entre l'agitation des flots.

En effet, l'ame chrétienne espère très fermement, mais humblement, et avec crainte : parceque d'une part elle sçait qu'elle a été conçue dans le péché, quelle a ajouté beaucoup d'autres péchés à ce premier, qu'elle a une foiblesse extrême, qu'elle reconnoit très mal les graces de Dieu, qu'elle n'en use pas comme elle devroit, et enfin tout ce que chacun sent dans son cœur de reproches. Voilà un sujet continuel de crainte et d'humilité. D'une autre part, le Chretien se dit à lui-même : " Il est vrai, je suis un abime de péché, de foiblesse et de misère ; mais Dieu m'a donné sa foi : il m'a fait naitre dans son église ; il me donne le désir de le servir ; au moins il me commande d'espérer en lui en quelque état que je puisse être. Pourquoi donc n'espérerois-je pas ? Si mon salut est fondé sur mes mérites et sur ma force, j'ai sujet de perdre toute espérance ; mais s'il est fondé sur la miséricorde du Père qui est infinie, sur le sang du fils de Dieu qui n'a point de prix, sur la vertu du saint esprit qui est invincible, il faut renoncer à tous ces principes de la foi, et désobéir formellement à Dieu, pour ne pas vouloir espérer en sa bonté, lorsqu'il me le commande."*

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* Instructions Chret. tom. i. pp. 28, 29, 31.

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Jesus Christ durant toute sa vie, comme il paroît par les Pseaumes, s'est considéré devant son Père comme chargés des péchés de tout le monde. Il s'étoit revêtu de tous nos crimes, afin de nous revêtir ensuite de sa justice ; et il avoit toujours devant les yeux l'excès horrible de notre folie, qu'il considéroit comme la sienne : " Vous sçavez combien ma folie est extrême." Il ressentoit toujours le poids de nos péchés, qu'il regardoit comme les siens : non pas parcequ'il en étoit coupable, mais parcequ'il vouloit nous en rendre innocens, en les lavant de son sang. " Mes péchés sont cause que le salut est bien éloigné de moi." Voilà la douceur et la modestie de l'agneau ; voilà son humilité. La douceur et l'humilité des saints venoit de la connoissance de leur souillure, et de leur propre infection. L'agneau étoit sans tache, mais il avoit prit sur lui toutes les nôtres : d'où vient qu'il se regardoit comme un lépreux : " Il nous a paru comme un homme couvert de lépre."— Chaque saint en particulier s'est humilié pour ses péchés : et l'agneau s'est humilié pour les péchés de tous les saints, et c'est ce qui les a rendus saints. Ils ne se seroient pas humiliés ensuite, s'il ne s'étoit humilié pour eux. Enfin l'agneau n'a ôté les péchés du monde qu'en s'humiliant, et en souffrant pour tout le monde.*

Tout le monde voit que l'Eglise ajoute ces mots à toutes ses prières : " Par Jesus Christ notre Seigneur ;" et il y en a beaucoup qui sçavent par cœur ce passage

* Hamon Cantique des Cantiques, tom. i. pp. 369, 370.

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célèbre de Saint Augustin : " L' Oraison qui ne se fait point au nom de Jesus Christ, non seulement n'efface pas le péché, mais devient elle-même péché." Mais il y en a peu qui comprennent bien cette vérité, et qui soient assez pénétrés de la dépendance intime que nous avons de Jesus Christ dans toutes nos actions, et particulièrement dans nos prières.

Cette dépendance est fondée sur la qualité d'unique Médiateur, qui convient à Jesus Christ d'une manière si singulière, que quoique par une expression que les Pères autorisent, on donne le titre de Médiateur à d'autres qu'à Jesus Christ, comme à la Vierge et aux saints du Ciel, ce n'est point néanmoins au même sens qu'à Jesus Christ.

S'ils sont Médiateurs *d'intercession*, ils ne sont point Médiateurs de *redemption*. La force même de leur intercession est fondée sur le mérite de Jesus Christ. Et s'ils prient comme principaux membres du corps de Jesus Christ, c'est toujours en employant, pour obtenir ce qu'ils demandent, le mérite de leur chef. Car l'homme par le péché est devenu incapable d'avoir un commerce immédiat avec Dieu : il est indigne de se présenter devant lui : il est incapable d'en rien obtenir. La grace même de la justification, quelque vénérable, réelle et intérieure qu'elle soit, ne rétablit point les hommes dans le droit de s'approcher de Dieu par eux mêmes, et de lui demander quelque chose en leur nom, en s'appuyant sur leurs propres mérites.

Car si cette grace les justifie, elle les justifie comme membres du corps de Jesus Christ, ou plutôt elle les y

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incorpore. C'est une grace essentiellement dépendante du chef qui est Jesus Christ, qui découle de lui, qui nous est donnée en lui et par lui, comme à ses membres. Sitôt que nous voudrons subsister séparément de lui, et nous présenter à Dieu sans notre Chef, nous n'agirons plus comme membres de ce corps divin, et nous serons indubitablement rejettés de Dieu.

Dieu ne nous a pas élus en nous regardant immédiatement en nous mêmes. Il nous a élus en Jesus Christ; c'est-à-dire qu' il a voulu que Jesus Christ fût auteur de notre salut; et que nous la dussions à ses mérites.

Il ne nous accorde pas aussi ses graces en nous considérant en nous mêmes, mais en nous considérant en son fils.

Il ne nous vivifie pas en nous mêmes, et en nous regardant séparément, mais il nous vivifie en Jesus Christ.

C'est en lui, dit encore l'Apôtre, que nous avons la redemption par son sang, et la rémission des péchés.

Cette totalité de graces renfermée sous le nom de redemption, s'obtient par les mérites de Jesus Christ; c'est-à-dire que c'est lui qui l'a méritée par l'oblation de son sang, de son corps, et de tout lui-même à Dieu; oblation qui n'a point commencé à la croix, mais au premier instant de l' incarnation, et qui n'a pas fini à la croix, mais qui continue dans le Ciel, et ne cessera jamais dans toute l'éternité.

C'est par cette oblation que Jesus Christ a faite de lui-même, et particulièrement de sa mort pour son église, qu'il est Prêtre éternel. C'est par elle qu'il l'a

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sanctifiée pleinement pour l'éternité. C'est par elle qu'il prie pour nous comme notre Prêtre.

Il n'y a donc point à espérer de sanctification, de grace, de délivrance, qu'en nous unissant à cette prière, et à cette oblation de Jesus Christ; en employant auprès de Dieu la victime même que Jesus Christ lui a offerte, et l'amour avec lequel il la lui offre; en nous fondant sur *ses* mérites, et *non sur les nôtres;* sur sa charité, et non sur la nôtre; sur le prix de son sang, et non sur le prix de nos œuvres séparées des siennes. Si nous pouvions obtenir quelque grace de Dieu indépendamment de Jesus Christ, et sans rapport à lui, cette grace ne découleroit pas de lui comme de notre Chef. Et ainsi il ne seroit pas vrai, comme dit l'Apôtre, que c'est lui qui fournit à tous ses membres par une vertue secrette ce qui est proportionné à chacun.

Peut-être que c'est faute d'être bien touché de ces vérités, que l'on obtient si peu de chose de Dieu. On s'approche avec hardiesse de Dieu comme si nous en étions dignes, et si nos prières pouvoient être reçues de lui par elles-mêmes, et sans rapport à Jesus Christ. On borne l'office de Médiateur à ce qu' il a fait sur la croix, et on ne songe pas qu'il n'a point cessé de l'être, et qu'il fait continuellement cet office, devant son Père. On borne l'effet de la croix et des mérites de Jesus Christ à la seule rémission des péchés, et à la justification; et on ne pense point que cet effet s'étend à tout, et comprend toutes les graces que nous pouvons espérer; que le prix en est déjà payé, et qu' il n'y a plus qu'à nous l'appliquer, en nous unissant

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étroitement à Jesus Christ. Nous voudrions en quelque sorte monter au Ciel sans lui, quoiqu'il soit dit, que personne ne monte au Ciel que celui qui est descendu du Ciel. Et ainsi afin d'y élever nos corps par la résurrection, et nos ames par la prière, il y faut monter comme faisant partie de son corps, comme étant membres de celui qui doit y élever la troupe des captifs qu' il a conquise par son sang.*

" Et qu'étant enraciné et fondé dans la charité, vous puissiez comprendre avec tous les saints, quelle est la largeur, la longueur, la hauteur et la profondeur de ce mystère." On peut dire que celui-là en comprend la *longueur*, qui sçait que nul depuis le commencement du monde jusqu'à la fin n'a été et ne sera justifié que par la croix et la passion du Fils de Dieu; que celui-là en comprend *la largeur*, qui sçait que l'Eglise répandue par toute la terre est sortie du côté de Jesus Christ mourant en la croix; que celui-là en comprend *la hauteur*, qui considère la sublimité et l'excellence de la gloire céleste, à laquelle nous parvenous par l'humilité et la bassesse de la croix de Jesus Christ; et qu'enfin celui-là en comprend la *profondeur*, qui considérant le secret de l'élection divine, s'écrie avec l'apôtre: " O profondeur des richesses de la sagesse de Dieu!"†

La mort et la résurrection de Jesus Christ sont le fondement de la religion. C'est pourquoi le sacrifice

* Nicole sur la Prière, tom i. pp. 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325.

† Tourneux Année Chrétienne, tom. x. pp. 94, 96.

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de l'Eglise en est une commémoration continuelle ; le Fils de Dieu y étant personnellement comme mort en figure, et ressuscité en effet pour nous communiquer les effets de ces deux mystères, dont l'un a payé le prix de notre délivrance, et l'autre nous applique le fruit de notre redemption, par l'infusion de son Esprit qui nous tire de la vie, des sens, et des inclinations humaines et corrompues, qui est une mort, pour nous faire vivre de la vie de Jesus Christ ressuscité.*

La grace de Dieu nous rendra forts, puisqu'il fera sa gloire de notre salut, puisque notre salut est le prix de sa mort, et qu'il achèvera en nous l'ouvrage de notre sanctification, que son Esprit saint y a commencé.

A comparer la vie des Chrétiens avec ces vérités de Jesus Christ, il semble, ou que leur vie sont une extravagance, ou que ces vérités sont des mensonges. Et cependant cette foi est vrai comme Dieu, et quiconque n'en vit pas est mort devant Dieu.†

Je vous souhaite, Madame, la joie et la paix du Saint Esprit, et une humble et très ferme confiance au prix infini du sang de Jesus Christ. Je suis en lui avec une sincèrité pleine de respect, le 13 Avril, 1680.

Le Maitre De Sacy.‡

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* De Sacy Lettres Chrétienne, tom. i. Lettre lix. p. 189.

† Lettre cxix. pp. 425, 426.

‡ Ibid, Lettre cvi. p. 375.

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PRIERE A JESUS CHRIST,

Mort et ressuscité.

Christ, homme de douleurs; Dieu, mais Dieu mort pour nous,
Rends nous par ton Esprit ton joug aimable et doux.
Que notre ame humble en toi, te suivant dans ta voie,
Souffre avec patience, avec force, avec joie;
Qu'immolant notre orgueil au pied de ce saint bois,
Nous goutions le bonheur d'avoir part à ta croix;
Et sauve, en nous sauvant, le fruit de ta victoire,
Le prix de ta mort sainte, et le sceau de ta gloire.
Laisse à Dieu l'avenir, impose un promt silence
Aux soins précipités de l'humaine prudence.
La foi vit jour à jour, et moment à moment,
Elle hait du cœur vain l'aveugle empressement.
La seule éternité toujours présente et stable,
L'occupant de Dieu seul, rend sa paix immuable.

Junge cor tuum æternitati Dei: et cum illo æternus et immutabilis eris. AUGUSTINUS.*

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* De Sacy Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, tom. i. pp. 454, 455.

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J'ai cru qu'il feroit peut-être plaisir au lecteur, de pouvoir comparer les dogmes du Jansénisme sur la grace efficace, avec ceux des Calvinistes: c'est pourquoi j'insére ici leur explication des cinq propositions du Père Cornet, et quelques extraits de Nicole sur la grace et la prédestination.

MARIE ANNE SCHIMMELPENNINCK.

LES CINQ PROPOSITIONS,

*Dans le sens que nous * les entendons et que nous les défendons.*

PREMIERE.

QUELQUES commandemens de Dieu sont impossible, à quelques justes qui veulent et qui s'efforcent foiblement et imparfaitement, selon l'étendue des forces qu'ils ont en eux, lesquelles sont petites et foibles. C'est-à-dire qu'étant destitués du secours efficace qui est nécessaire pour vouloir pleinement et pour faire ces commandemens, ils leur sont impossibles, selon cette possibilité prochaine et complette, dont la privation les mets en état de ne pouvoir effectivement accomplir ces commandemens. Et ils manquent de la grace efficace, par laquelle il est besoin que ces commandemens leur devien-

* C'est-à dire les Jansénistes.

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nent prochainement et entièrement possibles: ou bien ils sont dépourvus de ce secours spécial, sans lequel l'homme justifié, comme dit le Concile de Trente, ne sçauroit persévérer dans la justice qu'il a reçu; c'est-à-dire dans l'observation des commandemens de Dieu.

SECONDE.

On ne résiste jamais à la grace de Jesus Christ, qui est précisément nécessaire pour chaque œuvre de piété. C'est-à-dire, elle n'est jamais frustrée de l'effet pour lequel Dieu la donne effectivement.

TROISIEME.

Pour mériter et déméríter dans l'état de la nature corrompue, il n'est point requis en l'homme une liberté qui l'exempte d'une infallibilité et d'une certitude nécessaire; mais il suffit qu'il ait une liberté qui le délivre de la contrainte, et qui soit accompagnée du jugement et de l'exercice de la raison. Si l'on considère précisément l'essence de la liberté et du mérite, quoiqu'à raison de l'état où nous sommes en cette vie, notre ame se trouve toujours dans cette indifférence par laquelle la volonté, lors-même qu'elle est conduite et gouvernée par la grace, prochainement nécessaire et efficace par elle même, peut ne vouloir pas, cela est toutefois en telle sorte qu'il n'arrive jamais qu'elle ne veuille pas, lorsqu'elle est actuellement secourue de cette grace.

QUATRIEME.

Les Demi-Pélagiens admettoient la nécessité de la

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grace prévenante et intérieure pour commencer toutes les actions, même pour le commencement de la foi ; et leurs sentimens étoient hérétiques en ce qu'ils vouloient que cette grace fût telle que la volonté lui obéit ou la rejétat comme il lui plaisoit ; c'est-à-dire, que cette grace ne fût pas efficace.

CINQUIEME.

C'est parler en Demi-Pélagien de dire que Jesus Christ est mort pour tous les hommes en particulier, sans en excepter un seul, en sorte que la grace nécessaire au salut soit présentée à tous, sans exception de personne, par sa mort, et qu'il dépende du mouvement et de la puissance de la volonté d'acquérer ce salut par cette grace générale, sans le secours d'une autre grace efficace par elle-même.—*Besogne, tom. vi. pp.* 281 *to* 290. *Dom Clemencet, tom. iv. pp.* 521 *to* 529.

Extraits de Nicole sur le Symbole, Livre de la Grace et de la Prédestination.

DE LA PREDESTINATION.

Demande.—Que signifie le mot de Prédestination ?

Réponse.—Il signifie, selon Saint Augustin, généralement le décret que Dieu a formé de toute éternité, de faire certaines choses dans le temps, à l'égard des créa-

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tures raisonnables. Ainsi la prédestination a pour objet toutes les œuvres de Dieu, tant à l'égard des méchans, qu'à l'égard des bons; tant à l'égard des moyens, que de la fin. Néanmoins ce terme se prend aussi quelquefois comme opposé à celui de réprobation, et en cette manière il ne regarde que les élus, et signifie la même chose que ce que l'Ecriture appelle *élection*, dilection, vocation selon le décret. C'est en ce sens que Saint Augustin le définit: " *La prescience, ou la préparation des bienfaits de Dieu, par lesquels tous ceux qui sont délivrés, sont très certainement délivrés.*"

D.—Est-ce une question forte importante, de sçavoir si la prédestination à la gloire, précede ou suit la prévision des mérites?

R.—Cette question peut être importante ou ne l'être pas, selon l'idée que l'on a de la disposition de Dieu, à l'égard de ceux à qui il donne la grace, et selon la nature de la grace: car si l'on avoue, comme font quelques Théologiens, que par un amour gratuit et particulier, Dieu destine à certains d'entre les hommes, des graces qui ont infailliblement leur effet, et qui les conduisent certainement au salut, lesquelles il ne destine point aux autres, c'est alors une question peu importante de sçavoir si cette destination des moyens infaillibles et certains, précede ou suit le décret de donner la gloire à ces mêmes personnes, puisqu'en toutes ces deux manières l'on doit attribuer le salut à la préférence que Dieu a faite de ceux qu'il choisit, à ceux qu'il ne choisit pas. Mais cette même question est forte importante, si l'on suppose que Dieu dans le décret éternel, touchant

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la distribution de ces graces, n'a fait aucun choix des hommes, qu'il n'a résolu d'en donner à personne qui ayent un effet certain et infaillible, mais de présenter à tous une grace indifférente et indéterminée, et que ce n'est qu'ensuite de la prévision du bon et du mauvais usage que les hommes feront de cette grace commune, qu'il aime plus les uns que les autres, et qu'il destine les uns à la gloire éternelle, et les autres aux supplices éternels.

D.—Pourquoi cette question est-elle importante?

R.—Parcequ'il s'agit de sçavoir si c'est la volonté de Dieu, ou celle des hommes, qui est la cause du salut de ceux qui seront sauvés; si c'est eux-mêmes qui se distinguent des réprouvés, ou si c'est la grace de Dieu qui les en sépare. Or l'obligation qu'ils ont à Dieu étant fort différente, selon l'une ou l'autre de ces deux opinions, il est important de sçavoir celle qui est véritable, de peur de ravir à Dieu une partie de sa gloire, et de la reconnoissance qui lui est due.—*Nicole sur le Symbole, tom. i. pp.* 233, 234, 235.

PREDESTINATION GRATUITE.

Demande.—En quoi consiste le dogme de la prédestination gratuite?

Réponse.—Il consiste à croire que Dieu de toute éternité a choisi entre les hommes corrumpus par le péché, et qu'il pouvoit damner justement un certain nombre

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d'hommes, auxquels, par une pure miséricorde, il a résolu de donner le royaume du ciel, et de les en rendre dignes par des graces qui les délivrent infailliblement de leurs péchés, et les conduisent à la gloire qui leur est promise et préparée.

D.—La destination que Dieu fait aux élus de la gloire, ne précede-t-elle point, selon notre manière de concevoir, la préparation des moyens?

R.—Il est peu important de sçavoir s'il faut mettre quelque ordre entre ces décrets de Dieu, en concevant qu'il prépare les moyens aux élns, ensuite de ce qu'il leur a destiné la gloire; ou s'il ne vaut pas mieux concevoir ces deux décrets sans subordination, et comme ne faisant qu'un seul décret de Dieu, qui destine la gloire aux élus, non simplement, mais par certains moyens. L'essentiel de cette doctrine consiste uniquement à croire que Dieu dans ce choix éternel qu'il a fait des élus, qui les sépare des réprouvés, et qui leur destine la gloire et la grace, n'a point eu égard à aucun mérite qu'il ait prévu en eux, par lequel ils fussent plus dignes de ce choix que les réprouvés; mais qu'il a fait par sa seule volonté cette effroyable différence entre les uns et les autres, en destinant le salut aux élus, sans qu'ils le méritassent plus que les réprouvés, et en ne le destinant pas aux réprouvés, quoiqu'ils n'en fussent pas plus indignes que les élus.

D.—Dieu n'a-t-il point eu quelque raison secrete dans le choix qu'il a fait des uns plutôt que les autres?

R.—Saint Augustin croit qu'il en a eu quelqu'une, puisqu'il enseigne que nous sçaurons quelque jour la

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raison de ce choix : mais cette raison ne consiste point dans le mérite des élus au dessus des réprouvés ; puisque ces mérites sont *l'effet* de leur élection, et non pas le *fondement*. Dieu ne voit dans les hommes, avant qu'il les choisisse, que de l'indignité ; et s'il les rend ensuite dignes de la gloire éternelle, c'est par une grace qu'ils n'ont en aucune sorte mérité.—*Nicole sur le Symbole, tom. i. pp.* 240, 241, 242.

MOYENS PAR LESQUELS DIEU ACCOMPLIT LES DECRETS DE LA PREDESTINATION.

Demande.—Comment Dieu procure-t-il la gloire à ceux à qui il l'a destinée ?

Réponse.—Il la leur procure par des moyens certains et infaillibles, que Saint Augustin décrit en detail par ces paroles : " Il est indubitable," dit il, " à l'égard de tous ceux qui ont été séparés de la damnation originelle par le bienfait de la grace, que Dieu procure qu' ils entendent l'Evangile, qu'ils y croyent après l'avoir entendu, et qu'ils persévèrent jusqu'à la fin dans la foi, qui opère par l'amour ; et que s'ils s'écartent du droit chemin, ils y soient ramenés par les avertissemens :" et Dieu ne manque jamais d'opérer toutes ces choses dans ceux qu'il a fait vases de miséricorde, et qu'il a élus dans son Fils avant la création du monde, par une élection de grace : elle ne se fait pas en vue des mérites ; autrement la grace ne seroit plus grace.

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Dieu procure sa gloire en délivrant ses élus de tous dangers, en les soutenant dans toutes les tentations, et faisant que tout leur réussisse à bien; en les allant chercher aux extrémités du monde, en procurant quelques fois leur salut par la ruine des royaumes entiers: ce que Dieu même a voulu marquer dans le Prophete Isaie, où il parle de la sorte à ses élus:—"Ne craignez point, parceque je vous ai rachetés, et que je vous ai appelés par votre nom: vous êtes à moi;—lorsque vous marcherez au travers des eaux, je serai avec vous, et les fleuves ne vous submergeront point. Lorsque vous marcherez dans le feu, vous n'en serez point brulés, et la flamme sera sans ardeur pour vous, parceque je suis le Seigneur votre Dieu, le Saint d'Israel, votre Sauveur; j'ai livré pour vous l'Egypte, l'Ethiopie, et je livrerai les hommes pour vous sauver, et les peuples pour racheter votre vie. Ne craignez point, parceque je suis avec vous;—je vous amenerai des enfans de l'Orient, et je vous rassemblerai de l'Occident. Je dirai à l'Aquilon, Donnez moi mes enfans; et au Midi, Ne les empêchez point de venir: amenez mes fils des climats les plus éloignés, et mes filles des extrémités de la terre."

D.—Mais si les hommes ne se veulent pas rendre aux graces que Dieu leur donnent?

R.—Il est au pouvoir de Dieu, dit Saint Augustin, de convertir à la foi les volontés des hommes, quelques rébelles et quelques opposées qu'elles y soient, et d'opérer dans leur cœur qu'ils ne cèdent à aucunes adversités, et qu'aucune tentation ne leur fasse abandonner Dieu.

D.—De quelle nature est donc cette grace?

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R.—Ce n'est pas une grace semblable à celle du premier Adam, qui étoit telle que l'homme l'abandonnoit s'il vouloit, et dans laquelle il persévéroit aussi s'il vouloit; mais c'est la grace du second Adam, c'est-à-dire celle que Dieu donne aux élus par les mérites de Jesus Christ, qui fait que l'homme veut; en sorte que maintenant les Saints prédestinés par la grace au royaume des cieux, reçoivent un secours qui leur donne la persévérance même, et qui est tel, que non seulement sans ce secours ils ne sçauroient persévérer, mais qu'avec ce secours ils ne manquent jamais de persévérer.

D.—D'où vient que Dieu donnoit dans l'état d'innocence une grace plus foible, et qu'il en donne une plus forte dans l'état de la nature déchue?

R.—C'est, dit Saint Augustin, que la volonté du premier homme ayant été instituée sans aucun péché, et n'ayant point de concupiscence qui lui résistât, elle étoit si forte qu'il étoit raisonable de remettre le choix de persévérer à une volonté si bonne, et qui avoit tant de facilité à bien vivre; mais cette liberté ayant été affoiblie par le péché, il a fallu que l'infirmité de l'homme tombé fût soutenue par des graces plus puissantes.

Nicole sur le Symbole, tom. i. *pp.* 256, 257, 258, 259.

EXTRAIT DU MEME CHAPITRE.

Demande.—N'est-ce pas nous mêmes qui voulons et qui faisons le bien?

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Réponse.—Il est certain, dit Saint Augustin, que nous voulons le bien quand nous le vonlons ; mais c'est Dieu qui fait que nous le voulons. Il est certain que nous le faisons ; mais c'est Dieu qui fait que nous le faisons, en donnant à notre volonté des forces très efficaces. "Præbendo vires efficacissimas voluntati."

Nicole sur le Symbole, tom. i. *pp.* 261, 262.

DE LA REPROBATION.

Demande.—Qu'y a-t-il de certain à l'égard des réprouvés ?

Réponse.—Il y a plusieurs vérités certaines, et qui ne peuvent être niées sans erreur, comme sont celles-ci.

1. Que Dieu ne pousse au péché aucun des réprouvés.

2. Que les réprouvés adultes ne sont pas damnés parcequ'ils n'ont pû être bons, mais parcequ'ils ne l'ont pas voulu être, comme le Concile de Valence l'a expressement défini.

3. Que Dieu est bon et miséricordieux, à l'égard même des réprouvés.

4. Que nul des réprouvés ne reçoit de Dieu cette suite de graces efficaces, par lesquelles les élus sont infailliblement sauvés.

5. Que Dieu n'a point eu, à l'égard des réprouvés, cette même volonté absolue de les sauver, qu'il a eu à l'égard des élus.

6. Que quoique Jesus Christ soit mort pour tous, il n'a

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point néanmoins offert sa mort pour les réprouvés, de la même manière qu'il l'a offerte pour les élus; c'est-à-dire, avec un dessein efficace de leur obtenir des graces, par lesquelles ils fussent infailliblement sauvés. On éclaircira dans la suite quelques unes de ces vérités, mais cependant on doit remarquer en général, que toutes les questions qu'on peut former sur les réprouvés, et toutes opinions qu'on peut avoir sur les graces qui leur sont ou données ou refusées, ne changeront rien dans leur sort, quelque sentiment qu'on en ait; ce seront toujours les mêmes personnes qui arriveront à cette fin malheureuse, par laquelle ils sont nommés réprouvés, et qui y arriveront par la même suite d'actions. Il ne s'agit donc que de faire comprendre que ce sont eux-mêmes qui sont cause de leur perte, selon qu'il est dit: " perditio tua ex te Israel;" et que Dieu n'y contribue rien; qu'il ne leur fait aucune injustice, et qu'ils sont au contraire coupables, comme dit Saint Paul, pour avoir méprisé les richesses de sa bonté.

Nicole sur le Symbole, tom. i. *pp.* 286, 287.

1. Dieu a prévu que toute la postérité d'Adam seroit infectée de la corruption orginelle, qui la rendroit avec justice l'objet de sa colère.

2. Sur cette prévision il forme deux décrets; l'un de sauver de cette masse corrompue un certain nombre d'hommes, pour faire éclater en eux sa miséricorde; et par ce même décret il leur destine les moyens par lesquels il vent les faire parvenir au dégré de gloire qu'il a résolu de leur donner: l'autre, de faire paroitre sa jus-

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tice, en ne donnant pas les mêmes graces aux réprouvés.

3. Il prévoit toutes les actions des réprouvés, destitués de ces graces spéciales, et secourus néanmoins de beaucoup de graces générales.

4. Sur la prévision particulière de leurs péchés, il forme le décret de les punir selon qu'ils le méritent.*

Nicole sur de Symbole, tom. i. *p.* 290.

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* Nous recommandons au lecteur, après ces extraits, l'ouvrage intitulé, "*Le frein égal des Phariséens et des Antinoméens,*" par Jean Guilleaume de la Flechère, ministre de Madeley.

FINIS.

J. M'Creery, Printer, Black-Horse-Court, London.

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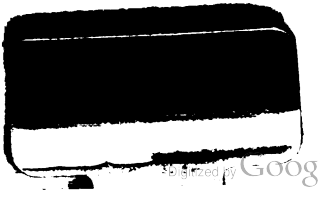

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